GOD WITH US
OR
AT HOME WITH JESUS

Rev. Albert F. Kaiser C.PP.S.

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Kai Kaiser, A.F.

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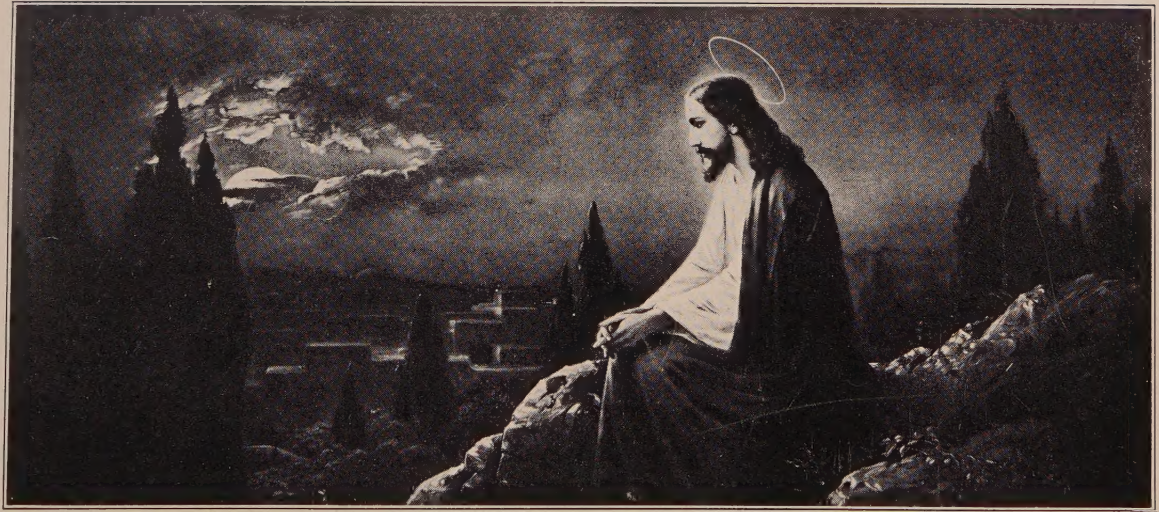
"God With Us" aims at popular presentation of life-giving truth. The essay form was adopted as most conducive to reflection. Since ephemeral preoccupations have, to a great extent, usurped the place of philosophic and religious meditation, a book of this kind may prove useful and refreshing. It will be welcomed by priests and religious for daily meditation, as well as by all earnest Christians who steal an occasional hour for soul-strengthening contemplation. Lecturers and preachers will find it an arsenal of spiritual and apologetic ammunition.

Its style is simple, direct, clear. The scope is broad; the treatment fundamental rather than novel. The development of each theme logical and quite thorough, though not exhaustive. The author draws copiously on practically all the sacred sciences and freely quotes literary gems. On the whole, the book is a mine of religious knowledge and a treasury of spiritual guidance. It is a book that requires time and thought to be appreciated as it deserves. It must be taken in small daily doses, in order to sink deep into the soul.



OUR LORD ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

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GOD WITH US

or

AT HOME WITH JESUS

Senior Novitiate

BY

ALBERT F. KAISER, C.PP.S.

WITH FOREWORD BY THE

RT. REV. JOSEPH SCHREMBS, D.D.

Bishop of Cleveland, Ohio

Senior Novitiate

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TO MY DEAR PARENTS
IN MEMORY OF THEIR
GOLDEN WEDDING
THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

FOREWORD

There is a strong tendency today to banish God from the world which He Himself has made. Many there are who not only deny the rights of God over them as their Creator, but who question His very existence. Under such conditions it is encouraging to find a book which clearly restates the basic proofs of God's existence, and in an interesting way defines our relations towards Him.

God is not merely the Creator Who, having finished His work, stands afar off and contemplates His creation with more or less interest, but He also watches over it with loving care and solicitude. His merciful Providence extends in an especial manner to man, whom He made in His own image and likeness. He is actually very near to us, for as St. Paul says—"God is not far from anyone of us; for in Him we live and move and are" (Acts 17. 27). And this nearness of God to ourselves is further emphasized by the teaching of our Divine Lord concerning the Fatherhood of God, which brings us into closest relationship with Him and makes us, as it were, the Members of His Household. "Thus shall ye pray:—Our Father Who art in heaven" (Matt. 6. 9).

God is indeed our Heavenly Father and we are His children. He has given us a mind with which to know Him, a will with which to serve Him, a heart with which to love Him. It is our duty as His children to employ these faculties in such a way that we may be drawn daily more closely to Him.

What would we think of a child that had no wish to know his father, that refused to obey him, and that spurned his love? Would this not be a most unnatural child? And yet, there are millions of men on earth who refuse to know, serve and love their Heavenly Father, Who is the very Author of their existence, and, therefore, has a much greater claim on their loyalty and affection than any earthly father.

The reason for this, in most cases, is not so much malice as thoughtlessness. So many will not pause long enough in the mad rush of their daily lives calmly to think the matter out for themselves. "With desolation is all the land made desolate because there is none that considereth in the heart" (Jer. 12. 11). Under these circumstances, any effort that is made to bring men back to a sense of their duty and make them realize their relationship and their responsibility to God, is highly commendable.

A perusal of the present book will reward the reader with a deep sense of the reality and the nearness of God, together with a consciousness of familiarity with his Heavenly Father, which will make him realize his sonship more fully, will make him desire a closer union with God, and will make him love God with his whole heart. Then will be fulfilled that promise of our Divine Lord—"If anyone love Me he will keep My word and My Father will love him and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him" (John 14. 23). And thus will the reader be made to feel, as the title of the book implies, really "God With Us."

JOSEPH SCHREMBS,
Bishop of Cleveland.

Feast of St. Teresa,
Oct. 15, 1929,
Cleveland, Ohio.

"Our people are not hostile to religion; they are ignorant of it; they live bowed down to the earth"—ABBÉ BOUGAUD, "The Great Peril," p. 70.

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INTRODUCTION

The most fundamental of all necessities is God. The greatest evil of our day is the absence of God in our lives. Evil is but the negation of good. The more good things we moderns possess, the more must we be on our guard against their corresponding evils, since for every good there is a corresponding negation. Divorce is evil, because marriage is good; pleasure-lust is evil, because sacrifice is good; impurity is evil, because purity is good; murder is evil, because life is good. But there are lesser goods and lesser evils.

In this life we think of the greatest good, not in terms of enjoyment, but rather of attainment. True enjoyment follows upon attainment. But what is man's greatest attainment? Is it not happiness in the bosom of God? Belief in God and obedience to His Law are the only safe conducts to everlasting bliss. Denial of God and disobedience to His Law are sure to result in everlasting denial and revolt in hell. Therefore the greatest evil on earth is the rejection and denial of the greatest Good, which is God.

The sinner and the sentimentalist see good in divorce, in pleasure-lust, in the lust of the flesh, yes even in race suicide and child murder, but none whose mind is sane, can see good in denying and rejecting God. It is the most consummate folly. ''The evil that outstrips all others, both in malice and in its fruits, the evil for which there is no compensation and out of which the very Eternal cannot bring happy consequences, is the conscious and deliberate denial of God, which, for the first time in history, has in our day taken on an organized, scientific, professional aspect—The worst evil of our day, the one utter evil—is unbelief in God, as it is actively promoted in our midst, under cover of education, in the guise of science, among the youth of the nation, who are neither warned against nor protected from its deadly poison.'' (See *Fortnightly Review,* vol. 34, pp. 347 ff.)

As early as 1913 James Leuba of Bryn Mawr sent out a questionnaire to American college professors and scientists to ascertain their belief in a personal God and the immortality of the soul. By means of a questionnaire, this champion of a new psychology, as false as it is novel, found out that among those who were questioned there were only 56 percent of the non-technical college men and 82 percent of the non-technical college women who believed in a personal God, whilst 71.6 percent of the same men and women believed in immortality. As an average among the technical representatives only 46.7 percent believed in immortality and 45.48 percent believed in a personal God. The lowest percentages of belief, strange to say, were found among the biological scientists, professors of sociology and psychologists:

Biological scientists	30.5 percent believed in a personal God 37 percent believed in immortality
Sociological professors	24.3 percent believed in a personal God 37.9 percent believed in immortality
Psychologists	24.2 percent believed in a personal God 19.8 percent believed in immortality

The spread of bolshevistic and socialistic teachings in Europe and America since the war is another danger. Not only Russia and Mexico, but also Germany and America are becoming hotbeds of organized atheism and sovietism. Two great German freethinkers' organizations have united their forces, aided and abetted by the Freethinkers' Association of Russia, which has units in sixteen countries. In 1926 the German organization had a membership of 80,000 and in 1927 over a million. The three years following the close of the world war witnessed in Germany alone the defection of 781,457 Protestants and 118,993 Catholics from Christian faith. Since then the number has grown to 1½ million souls. In Germany, the freethinkers' organization aims to root religion out of the schools and bring about apostasies from the Church by organized secularization of Christian feasts, materialism and atheism through such agencies as the theater, moving pictures, charitable associations, etc. (Cf. Rev. Dr. von Capitaine, N. C. W. C., April 18, 1927.)

In our own country recently, free thought societies have been formed in more than twenty universities and colleges, openly calling themselves a militant foe of Church and Clergy. Homer Croy, in his study of the progress of atheism in America, writes that in seventeen months' time, the atheist organization has established chapters in twenty colleges and three high schools. A junior atheistic movement is also afoot, especially in New York, where 12,000 children are taught atheism. Tens of thousands of circulars and various lecture tours have aimed solely at the destruction of religion and morality. Atheistic propaganda would abolish Sunday as a legal holiday, would substitute natural (and unnatural) ethics for Christian morality, would tax Church property, would eliminate, if possible, the parochial school. (See *World's Work,* May and June, 1927.) In Russia the Soviet Catechism on atheism, introduced into the Soviet schools, teaches that the social misery of Russia is due to belief in God. The radicals in America have not gone so far. They rather decry the parochial school as unfit to produce American citizens and ridicule religion and the Bible, and aim to counteract in a destructive way the good influence of the Church and the Clergy. In our high schools and colleges atheism is taught both directly and indirectly. Propaganda in high schools and colleges is rampant, working under the auspices of the Society of the Godless, the parent stem in New York; of God's Black Sheep in Philadelphia; of the Devil's Angels in Los Angeles; of the Damned Souls' Society in Rochester; of the Circle of the Godless in Wisconsin University, etc.: they deny God, impugn the doctrines on heaven and hell, ridicule the supernatural, decry the Church as a dangerous institution, and call the Holy Bible a Jewish scrap book and a fake. These atheistic movements are sponsored by Charles Smith, Freeman Hopwood, De Castro, Wm. George Henry, Howell S. England, William Thomas Withrow, George W. Minton, by the Freemasons (according to Hopwood), and many so-called intellectuals and scientists, as shown above. (See "Atheism Rampant in our Schools," *World's Work,* June, 1927.)

The modern world gives little thought to the ultimate end of man. It has no answer to the riddle of life, nothing to satisfy the soul.

Another sad development is indifferentism and agnosticism. During the celebration at Washington of the sixteenth Centenary of the Promulgation of the Nicene Creed, Dr. Edwin J. Ryan said: "When the Church is attacked, the underlying motive is by no means infrequently a desire to get rid of this or that doctrine but of all doctrine, a desire to undermine the dogmatic principle itself and to reduce Christianity to a vague, colorless, sentimental system that will somehow render life quiet and pleasant by gratifying religious emotion without arousing the intellect or searching the heart."

The press is probably even a greater danger to faith and morals than perverted higher education. It, so to speak, popularizes all the modern errors and heresies of the college and university. A new religious congregation dedicated exclusively to the work of the Catholic press has been founded by a priest of Czecho-Slovakia, Father A. Pattloch, to further the religious as well as the commercial and technical phases of publishing Catholic papers, and eventually to found circulating libraries and to train speakers in order to bring the message of religion to the masses. We hope other countries will adopt some similar effective agency to counteract the organized attacks of radicalism and atheism.

Humility is truth and consequently leads to the God of truth—another truism not found in the modernist's conception of life. Mortification likewise is a bugbear for the easy-going spirit of today. From childhood our forbears were inured to difficulty and hardship. The contrary is true today. No wonder we witness the decay of authority and the ruin of morals. Self-denial is the truest mark of the disciple of Christ. It is the one moral virtue that should act as the energizing force of all the rest. Without it faith, hope and charity will bear no fruit. Without the life-giving principle of self-denial, the domestic and moral virtues are impossible.

Modesty has departed and purity is on the wane. Irreverence, callousness and animalism can be checked only by a wholesome return to modesty, which is a guardian angel to Chastity. Good will and prayer and even the Sacraments avail us little, if we neglect the safeguards. Never in the world before have civilized men attempted the impossible task of living pure lives, after throwing all prudence and caution to the winds. May we learn from Russia that fools cannot rush in where angels fear to tread. By all means, we must begin early to inculcate in our children and young folks the sense of modesty and shame, of reverence for the human body as the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Prayer with many people is a lost art, though it is as necessary for the soul as is work for the body. Contemplation of heavenly truths is sadly neglected even by those who would have others believe they are living godly lives. The life that counts in the sight of God must aim to rise above the earth to sunlit skies. In meditation and by aspiration the soul fixes its gaze and its desires on Paradise.

In "The Hand of God" the author has purposely avoided some of the most treasured experiences of his life, which he is tempted to tell only in moments of exalted feeling or when it might aid a poor struggling confidant. The theme is too sacred and too personal for the relentless gaze of the public. He begs the indulgent reader to search his own past for similar protection from dangers and other singular favors.

Patience and resignation is the lesson we learn from God's guiding and directing hand. His general and particular Providence should be man's mentor in life's devious paths. When not actively engaged in work and prayer and even when so engaged, our minds might profitably ponder the sublimest example of patience and resignation, Jesus in the Garden of Olives. A reverent consideration of the Passion of Christ is the well-spring of Christian joy in suffering and the harbinger of resignation. Jesus prays from the mount of sacrifice: "Into thy hands I commend my Spirit."

The Sacramental Life of Christ closes our labor of love. Before ascending to heaven, Jesus promised to remain always with the children of men in a new and mysterious way. In the holy sacraments, therefore, He continues His love and care for mankind. May God, in His mercy, impart the grace of divine union to all devout souls who keep in touch with Him by a frequent and worthy reception of the Sacraments.

The writer expresses grateful appreciation for the encouragement and aid received from the late Father Edward Burke, Rector of Our Lady of the Lake Seminary, and from Benedict Elder, both of whom painstakingly reviewed and corrected the manuscript. He likewise thanks Father Richard Brennan, D.D., for verifying the Scripture texts.

Albert F. Kaiser, C.PP.S.,
Cleveland, Ohio.

PART ONE

THE SUPERNATURAL SOURCE

GOD

"God is here on earth the most popular of beings. In the midst of the fields, leaning upon the implement of his labor, the cultivator of the soil lifts his eyes to heaven and he names God to his children by a motion as simple as his soul. The poor call upon Him, the dying invoke Him, the wicked fear Him. Their crowned armies place Him at the head of their battalions, victory gives Him thanks, defeat asks Him for help, the people arm themselves through Him against their tyrants; there is no time, nor place, nor occasion, nor feeling where God does not appear and where He is not named. What is there in this word? Shall I solemnly assert it upon oath? Nothing but a name, it is true, but that name is the name of God. It is the name that all nations have adored, in whose honor temples were built, priesthoods consecrated, prayers addressed. It is the greatest, the holiest, the most efficacious, the most popular name that the lips of man have received the grace to pronounce."—LACORDAIRE.

CHAPTER I

CREATED EFFECTS DEMAND AN UNCREATED FIRST CAUSE

The fundamental of facts is the existence of God. It is written on every page of Holy Scripture. It is enshrined in the Tradition of the Fathers; it breathes in all literature. It is emblazoned in all art. Everywhere it appears as incontrovertible truth. This thesis, however, owing to the compromises of deistic philosophy and the assumptions of atheistic exponents of science, furthered by modern schemes of education and of commercialized journalism, needs to be set in its proper light, with the necessary relations of cause and effect to a first cause, of human reason to a divine intellect, of design to an all-wise Designer, of a moral law to a Supreme Lawgiver.

God exists: Is uncaused.

Nothing exists without a sufficient reason. It is impossible to conceive of a being which has not, either in itself or in another, the reason of its existence. The world exists, we exist. But if we exist now, some being existed always. If we admit a ''time'' when nothing existed, we must hold that nothing could exist, for nothing can come from nothing. There is no effect without a cause. To say that a being is its own cause is to say that it acts before it exists. If nothing existed there could be no cause, and no cause, no effect. If we admit that anything exists now, we must hold that some being existed always. This being is the Primary Cause of all Existence.

We cannot conceive of an endless series of secondary causes and effects. This meaningless phrase was invented to deny the Primary Cause. The terms number and series denote a measurement of quantity and of time. In point of quantity, no number is so great but what another quantity could be added, so that the highest number remains finite. In point of time, every series must have a beginning. Time is impossible without a beginning.

Hence there was a time when the first secondary cause began to exist. It was produced by the First Cause whom we designate as God and without whom no secondary causes or effects could ever have begun.

If this First Being were not necessary, He would be contingent, that is, he could exist or not exist. Man is contingent; the corporeal world is contingent; the plants and animals are contingent. A few years ago we did not exist; nor did our ancestors exist always, nor the plants and animals, nor the minerals nor the earth itself. That the world did not always exist is also quite certain from science, if we can believe the scientific teaching that thousands of years ago everything was in a *boiling state,* in which no finite being could subsist. Hence they came into existence later. They were produced by the Necessary Being, whom we call God.

There must be a sufficient cause for everything. It is absurd to say that the world came of itself, as if something could come from nothing; or that it always existed, as if inorganic and dead matter could produce living things. The scientists must show us how we can bridge four wide gaps in the order of causation: The passing from nothing to something; the passing from dead inorganic matter to live organic matter; the passing from living matter (plants) to sentient matter (animals); the passing from the sentient to the intellectual (men and angels). Can they prove that something came from nothing; that plants derived from minerals, that animals evolved from plants, that men grew out of the animals? Indeed not; absolute evolution is as impossible as a self-made automobile.

Science confirms the old adage: Every living product comes from an egg-germ. Numberless attempts to reproduce the germ of life, whether in plant or in animal, have failed. Life cannot come from dead matter. Only a creative act can produce life. Hence there must be a higher being than dead matter—a living, spiritual, intellectual, supreme being.

The early Darwinian theory, even though it admitted a Creator, has never yet succeeded in proving that one genus can produce anything except its own kind. Science must fall back upon a *first plant,* a *first animal,* a *first man.* Nor can one species produce another by adaptation. Modern scientists have discarded the conclusions of Darwin.

God said: "Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit-tree yielding *fruit after its kind*" (Gen. 1. 11). The truth is that all secondary, contingent, imperfect causes in the plant, animal and human realms presuppose a first cause, a necessary cause, a perfect cause, whom we designate as God.

Because there can not be an endless series of causes there must be *one first cause.* Since there can not be an endless series of contingent beings there must be One *Necessary* Being Who contains the sufficient reason for His existence within Himself. As there cannot be an endless series of imperfect or limited beings, therefore there must be one unlimited or *perfect* Being, who is the standard of all created perfection, which is God.

As a practical corollary, all created beings are dependent on their Creator. There is one Creator. All others creatures. There is one Absolute and Independent Being, and all the rest are relative to Him and dependent upon Him for all they have and are. There is one necessary and Supreme Being and all others are neither necessary nor supreme. All men, as well as all other creatures, are contingent and subject to God. The supermen of Nietzsche and of other philosophers are the mere idle dream of men who would fain be gods. To serve God is to rule our lower nature; to refuse to serve God by faith, hope, love, prayer, worship and the virtues of humility, purity, unselfish service, means to be ruled by the degrading influence of sin. Hence all men must know, love and serve God as *He would* be known, loved and served, not as some would choose to do according to their *own whims* and *fancies.* "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." One God, one true religion. One Master, and only *one way* of serving Him, according to *His* pleasure and command.

CHAPTER II

DESIGN IN THE WORLD DEMANDS AN INTELLIGENT DESIGNER

Wonderful harmony and order exist in the world. Whether we consider the heavenly bodies in their mathematical exactness, or the tiny cells of plant, animal and human life in their exquisite adaptability, all is harmony, order, law. Design is exhibited in the infinitesimal creations and in the most stupendous works of nature. Design implies a Designer. The almost infinite variety, the universal harmony, the constant unity and definite purpose witnessed in nature imply a superior intelligence. Even Pagan philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, for example, saw in the order of the universe a testimony of God.

Aristotle: "In contemplating the earth, the sea, the heavens, can we doubt that there is a great God and that all this world is His work?" Napoleon, ill-fated genius, declared: "I contemplate this universe, so vast, so ingeniously arranged, so magnificent and I say to myself, 'this cannot be the effect of chance, but it must be the work of an all-powerful and intelligent Being, as superior to man as the universe is superior to the most cleverly constructed machine.' "

The luminaries of the heavens follow their course with mathematical precision, as with lightning speed they hurtle through space, never departing from orbits to which they were assigned thousands of years ago; surely, "The heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of His hands" (Psalm 18.1; Cf. Ps. 28 and others). Ecclesiasticus, speaking of the Eternal Wisdom which orders and directs all things to their end, says: "Who hath numbered the sand of the sea, and the drops of rain, and the days of the world? Who hath measured the height of heaven, and the breadth of the earth, and the depth of the abyss? Who hath searched out the wisdom of God that goeth before all things?—There is one most high Creator Almighty, and a powerful King, and greatly to be feared, who sitteth upon His throne and is the God of dominion'' (Ecclus. 1. 2, 3, 8).

The modern materialist, deifying the forces of nature, might profitably reflect on the words of Wisdom: ''All men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and who by these good things that are seen, could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman; but have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world. With whose beauty, if they, being delighted, took them to be gods: *let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful* than they: for the first author of beauty made all those things. Or if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them, that He that made them is *mightier* than they: For by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby'' (Wisdom 13. 1–5).

Design is evident not only in the countless heavenly bodies bound together in admirable unity and in universal harmony but likewise in all living creatures, from man down to the lowest forms of animal and plant life. What wondrous harmonies, what inimitable purpose and design are revealed by the magnifying power of the microscope! Linnaeus declares: ''In all His works, even the smallest, the most imperceptible, what strength! what wisdom! what indefinable perfection!''

Who formed the first creatures and implanted in their natures the power to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch, to eat and by eating to be nourished and rebuilt from day to day? Who endowed living things with power to breathe, to move, to grow? Who crowned human nature with the power to think, to will? Who gave the laws of life, the powers to reproduce each after its own kind? The growth and development of the human embryo from the tiniest seed of life to the new-born babe is the study of a life-time. Anatomical charts are an amazing revelation of the exact laws of growth and development.

In the lower animals we find a wonderful natural instinct. Who revealed to the cat the healing powers of catnip? Who gave the dog the keen sense of smell, the instinct of fidelity to a kind master? Who gave the wild animals each a peculiar weapon of self-defense? Nature answers with a thousand voices: "God!" Blessed be God.

The egg is a typical example of all incipient life. Saint-Ellier in an admirable book on the Order of the World (p. 170) says of the bird's egg: "It is a living machine that is built up in a narrow envelop, separated from the outer world by impenetrable veils, and yet how many adaptations are realized to the future surroundings which as yet exert no influence! Without, there is light; within, despite the darkness, there are being constructed those optical instruments called eyes. Without, noise and sounds of every description reign in the air; within, are formed those acoustic instruments termed ears. Without, grow animals and vegetables that are to serve for nourishment; within, are constructed tubes, retorts and complicated apparatus to serve for digestion and assimilation of food; without, in fine, various mediums: earth, water, air; within, are being built organs of locomotion best adapted to the medium in which the animal is to live, on the earth, or in the water, or in the air,—the pre-established harmony is complete; it is so perfect that nothing is wanting, nothing superfluous." In a million years man will not be able to produce a bird's egg as God has made it, subject to the laws of life and capable of reproducing itself.

To appreciate the wonders of God-made design, let us compare one such example with a man-made mechanism. Contrast a clock with a butterfly. Here is a clock. See with what consummate skill it is constructed. The wheels, the main-spring, the hair-spring, the lever escapement, the dial, the hands, the screws and rivets, are all in their proper places. Each is co-related to each, and so admirably adjusted that the clock will indicate accurately the hours, minutes and seconds as they go by. At each hour, and at the half and quarter hours, the exact time is struck upon a gong, so that one may hear as well as see how the day advances. What a splendid product of man's intelligence! If chance cannot construct a clock, still less can it grow a flower, a vegetable, a fruit, or produce an insect, each of which is immeasureably more marvelous than any mere mechanism.

Take an ordinary butterfly! If less useful, it is far more beautiful. An infinitely greater power and intelligence is needed to create a butterfly than to make a clock. Contrast the two. The clock moves, but it has no life. It requires periodic winding; the insect needs no such attention. The clock is made up of many parts cunningly pieced together; but the butterfly is composed of many more parts, and much more ingeniously put together. Behold its beautiful wings, how exquisitely adorned with gold and stained with sapphire; how strong the muscles which move the wings and carry the body through the air. Examine the six delicate and exquisitely proportioned legs, with their subtle joints, their sinews and muscles. Contemplate the eye or the ear. How delicate, how complicated, how marvelous! Compared with the butterfly, the most skillfully devised clock is but a crude and inartistic object.

Further, who is there among men with genius and intelligence enough not only to manufacture a clock, but so to manufacture it that one clock may in its turn construct other clocks like to itself? Ah, you smile at the bare notion as being too ridiculous and impossible to entertain. Yet a single butterfly lays tiny eggs that grow into worms called larvae which in turn develop into moths and finally exquisite butterflies. How is it possible that men can witness these and countless similar marvels, and yet be stupid enough to deny the existence of a reasonable and intelligent God presiding over nature? They strain at the gnat but they swallow the camel! (See "*Earth to Heaven,*" pp. 8–14.)

CHAPTER III

HUMAN REASON POSTULATES A DIVINE INTELLECT

As the unique and universal harmony demand a supreme Designer of the visible universe, so likewise do the universal ideas of the mind presuppose a supreme Reasoner in the logical order.

There are some truths common to all men: the arithmetical, geometrical, metaphysical and moral truths. Before man existed there were truths and long after he will cease to be on earth, these truths will remain; three plus three will always and necessarily be six; the circumference of a circle will always and necessarily be the diameter multiplied by 3.1416; a thing cannot be and not be at the same time; two contradictories cannot be true and false at the same time; the good must always be preferred to the bad; fidelity is always better than faithlessness. All men and all nations have recognized these truths. They are so conformed to reason that they are aptly called self-evident, they form the very norm of correct thinking, the laws of thought. Their universality and necessity do not depend on the actual existence of numbers, of a circle, of a true or a false thing, of good and faithful beings; for we all know these truths as such exist in the mind, and even though they are not without a foundation in the thing, yet they were true always, for if three plus three were not six before measurable things were created, it would not be true now. Three times three was always nine, long before any created intellect perceived it.

But if such universal and necessary ideas exist and have not their sufficient cause in men, or in their objects, there must be some transcendent necessary Being, truth itself, the necessary, universal cause of them. Unless we postulate a Supreme Intellect in which these ideas originated and from which they derive their standard or norm, there is no objective truth whatever, for objective truth is conformity with fact or reality.

Universal ideas therefore are the expression of an eternal mind, wherein all created things find their norm and conformity. As a particular and contingent fact presupposes a particular and contingent intellect which weighs and conforms its word to the particular fact, so a universal and necessary truth demands a universal and necessary Intellect. This all-embracing Intellect shaped and fashioned universal truths from eternity and comprehended them always, but only in time gave them external utterance in created things. Hence they were true before God exemplified or embodied them in external things.

If we were to deny universal ideas we would thereby deny the laws of thought, of science, of philosophy, yea the very foundation of religion and morality. If we were to hold that universal truths have their cause in material things, we fall into materialism, which is absurd. If we place the cause in the mind of man, assuming they have no real existence in things, we deny the cogency of the senses and fall into the illusion of extreme idealism, as blind as it is unreal.

PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS: FACTS AND THEORIES

If universal and necessary ideas emanate from the Eternal Mind of God and are eternally true, all men must base the science of correct thinking and the art of noble living upon them. Because some advocates of science and some religious teachers base their conclusions upon the shifting sands of time, instead of on the calm unruffled ocean of eternity, they stray from the truth. Scientific and religious truths cannot contradict each other because they proceed from the One God of Truth. Pseudo-scientists, in their love for novelty and notoriety and because of a woeful lack of religious sense, sometimes shoot their arrows far from the heart of truth. They ridicule the highest truth. In their effort to demolish religious truth they set up in its place some clever hypothesis and call it science.

True religion also must be based on unchangeable, eternal truths. One tenet cannot be true today and false tomorrow. We must be taught of God. We must ignore the waves of popular thought and feeling, whenever these run counter to truth eternal. For instance, fidelity is always better than faithlessness, then surely we can find no room for the novelty of divorce which excuses faithlessness. The doctrine which refuses divorce of the marriage-bond consummated is based on the eternally true principle that fidelity is better than faithlessness.

A thing cannot be true and false simultaneously. A religion cannot be true and false at the same time. The world has gone from salutary truth and fallen into the miserable error of indifference to truth. How illogical and superficial the current idea that it is all the same what we believe, provided we live a good life?

Moral life is necessarily molded by principles of conduct, which in turn, depend on early religious training and on the depth of religious conviction, the sublimity of religious faith. Washington warned our forefathers against the delusion of morality without religion. It is indispensably necessary to have faith in God and in the heaven-born doctrines of Jesus Christ which are found entire and complete in the Catholic Church.

If Christ had considered it all the same what we believe, would He have thought it worth while to leave His heavenly home and for our sake don the garb of humanity and drink the cup of sorrow to its dregs? If it mattered not what we believe, why did Christ insist upon His Divine Nature and Work, why did He prove His Messianic mission by the most astounding miracles, why did He seal His testimony on the Cross? When solemnly asked whether He be the Son of God or not, Christ insisted that He is the Son of God, although this assertion cost His life.

No greater error can be conceived, nor more fatal opinion cherished than indifference to truth. If religion were man-made, as is science, it would be subject to improvement and progress. Science progresses from mere opinion and theory to true knowledge, whereas religion possessed true knowledge from the beginning. Religion influences men by extrinsic adaptions to modern needs and requirements. But intrinsically religion cannot change, just as God himself cannot progress or improve. Modern progress is mostly exterior. He that would make interior progress must adapt himself to a standard of faith and morals as unchangeable as the All-perfect. True progress cannot ignore spiritual values. It demands an unchangeable standard, according to which we must change our habits of life. Our habits do not regulate principles, but principles improve our habits. The only way to stem the tide of unbelief and immorality is to get back to the eternal principles of conduct and faith. These are the Ten Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER IV

THE MORAL LAW PROCLAIMS A SUPREME LAW GIVER

As the law of nature proclaims a supreme Designer and the law of the mind a supreme Reasoner, so too the moral law proclaims a supreme Legislator in the sphere of human acts and human destiny.

The reality of a moral law demanding the avoidance of evil and the performance of good is attested both by the individual conscience and the universal consent of mankind. Though men differ at times as to what is good or bad, they agree on the existence of the moral law. When man suffers a grave injury in his good name, his professional honor or his property, he reasons thus: That scoundrel who has defamed my name, ruined my honor and robbed me of my belongings, has violated my right. But right in one entails a reciprocal duty in another. There can be no right without a corresponding duty.

The law of God written in our heart tells us not only when our rights are violated, but also warns us when we violate the rights of others. Who, having sinned, does not sooner or later hear the still small voice of conscience telling him he has offended against the moral law? The veriest scoundrel, unless he has habitually stifled his conscience, hears that inner voice of conscience which is more powerful than his evil deeds, more unyielding than his stubborn will. Rising above the din of pleasure and the tumult of passion, it cries: ''You have sinned against the moral law.''

He who denies the moral law must hold that human reason is invincibly erroneous and unreliable in the most essential problems of life; that society, whose solidity and permanence rest on the moral principles of truthfulness and honesty, virtue and honor, is based on a huge deception; that moral law and moral restraint are not normal in society.

No reasonable man can maintain these baneful conclusions. He must admit that human reason is reliable at least in its essential, universal and spontaneous utterances. But the moral law is an essential dictate of reason, and it is proclaimed universally and spontaneously. Even if one-half of the so-called intellectuals profess and teach atheism, we can still say: The comparativly few consistent atheists trying to force a contrary argument do not destroy the practical universality and spontaneity of reason's claim. Is it not more reasonable to heed the calm voice of mankind in all ages than the self-appointed moderns shouting from street corners and universities, through lecture tours and scurrilous sheets, that there is no God, so as to give the senses and passions free rein? The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God! The modern goes the ancient fool one better, with ever increasing assurance he says it openly and loud, trying in vain to convince himself.

Who is the author of this supreme moral law, which is necessary and immutable? It cannot be the individual, or social groups, or society as a whole. None of these can constitute a norm that would even approach the necessary and unchangeable moral law. Man-made laws often contradict one another and are constantly subject to change and improvement. Only in so far as they are based on the supreme moral law do they contain elements of permanence and stability. The moral law must proceed from a source more intelligent and morally higher than man or society. Its author must be a supreme Intelligence, a supreme Good Being, whom we designate as God.

Every law requires a sanction, that is, adequate punishment or reward. The moral and spiritual life is within. Can society look into man's mind, will, heart, passions, and see the inner struggle, hear the inner voice? No, it can merely behold the exterior action. Has society any means of compelling or adequately persuading its members to keep the moral law? Can the exterior sanction of armed force, police raids, electric chairs, prisons, penitentiaries and houses of detention touch the proud and stubborn will of man? Can the state reward heroic interior virtue, or recompense private sacrifice to duty? Do not all reasonable men admit the very inadequacy of the rewards and punishments of the present life to be an argument for a higher realm of existence, a higher court of appeal, a higher law and law-giver?

Morality is not only real and of supernatural origin; but by its very nature based on religion. But religion is impossible without a Deity. Brunetiere, the one-time freethinker whose reflections brought him to the Church, says: "The moral law finds its support and sanction only in God. Morality is nothing, if not religious." Hence if we deny God, we deny all moral law and moral rectitude. But it is unreasonable and absurd to deny the moral law in the face of so much evidence for it. Therefore there must be a moral law-giver, God.

Another phase of the moral argument is the actual existence of virtue, even heroic virtue, the practical result of the moral law. "From their fruits you shall know them," is true not only of men but also of doctrines: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; nor an evil tree, good fruit." This is a crucial test of the truth or falsity of a doctrine. Even Renan admits that the virtue of man is, after all, a proof of God's existence. How many a conversion to the true faith has been brought about by the great spectacle of Christian virtue: charity, chastity, patience, self-sacrifice! Thousands of people came to see and admire the heroic lives of a St. Teresa, a St. Francis de Sales, a St. Philip Neri, a St. Vianney of Ars.

Even the materialist, Taine, testifies: "Today after a lapse of eighteen centuries, Christianity is for four hundred millions of human creatures the spiritual organ, the great pair of wings absolutely necessary to enable man to rise above himself. . . . Always and everywhere during eighteen hundred years, the moment these wings fail or are broken, public and private morals fall into decay." Belief in God has been the inexhaustible source of virtue and happiness for untold millions, the spring of spiritual solace in trial and misfortune, the support of right and noble living. Alfred Fouillee in his work, "France from the Moral Point of View," insists on this truth: "If God does not exist, religion would be a falsehood, and this falsehood would have produced the virtue, the peace, the joy, the innocence of a St. Stanislaus, the charity of a St. Vincent de Paul, the holiness and heroism of countless saints."

Therefore God must exist.

He that doubts the existence of God unearths the foundation of the moral law, without which in turn the civil law has no sanction. Lawlessness and anarchy ensue. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in a country where God is doubted are impossible. Atheism under whatever guise—agnosticism, pantheism, modernism, materialistic science—is a cancer that devours human dignity, eats away the sense of God's fatherhood, makes a mockery of human brotherhood and leaves only the pleasure-hunting, the power-seeking, the slave-ridden—the selfish and proud—as composing human society.

If the modern world, despite its giant strides in mechanical and temporal progress fails to make intellectual and spiritual advancement, it is because God is ignored and His law flouted. God is unchangeable, His divine law unalterable. If we evade punishment here, we shall not escape retribution hereafter. Let the good, even in great stress and difficulty look forward to eternal reward as a spur to keeping the law. The wicked, on the contrary shall fear! For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. If not here below, they shall fear hereafter. Eternal humiliation is the price of unrepented sin. The reprobate shall see and gnash their teeth as they compare their own folly with the wisdom of the elect: "These are they, whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor. Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the Saints" (Wisdom 5. 3–5).

SUMMARY

Atheism would destroy the various orders of truth. It would leave society without a rational account of the physical order, the uniformity and constancy in the laws of nature. Atheism cannot produce conviction in the logical order of truth. Denying the eternal and necessary Truth it wipes out the foundation of truth, only to substitute negation and doubt in religion and expediency in business. No wonder that a Vanini at the sight of a funeral pile was forced to exclaim against all his former utterances: "O God!" In the perils of death even a Valeny took out his rusty beads to pray to the Lord God of hosts.

Atheism is contrary to the ethical order, in so far as it would destroy moral principles, moral standards and the highest moral authority. It would prevent the individual from attaining his final end, the summum bonum.

The social order likewise would be destroyed. Civil law and social peace would cede to anarchy and revolution. Witness Soviet Russia.

Atheism is directly opposed to the historical order, both as to its creation and its preservation. Without an Almighty Creator and Governor there could be no historical order. Without creation and preservation of animate and inanimate life, there could be no record of historical events and facts. The history of progress would be a total blank.

Atheism, in short, is a negation of existence, of physical, intellectual, moral, social and historical order and progress. Universal atheism would destroy all joy in life, all solace in misfortune, all faith and hope in the hereafter, all love for the Supreme Good. Atheism, therefore, is the arch-enemy of mankind.

PART TWO

THE SUPERNATURAL STATE

DOUBT OR DOGMA

"All who wish to attain their final purpose in life must seek the truth. Truth is to the mind what light is to the eye. Doubt is darkness. When a clear-eyed individual can say: 'I wish I were blind,' he who knows, can say: 'I wish I could doubt.'

"The mind was made to grow by feeding on truth, not by playing with truth. There are basic principles, dogmas if you wish, in every science. These are the steel floors on which to build the conning towers of knowledge. Without these basic principles or first truths, there could be no second truths, no progress. The principles are incontrovertible, whether accepted as hypotheses, as axiomatic truths, or as revealed doctrine."—CORNELIUS MENNIS.

CHAPTER V

THE NATURE AND END OF MAN

"What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou hast made him a little less than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor and hast set him over the works of Thy hands" (Ps. 8. 5).

Man is a creature composed of body and soul. His body is a little world in itself. His soul is a vital spark of heavenly flame, an image of the Creator. Man shares existence with the minerals, nutrition and growth with the plants, sensation and self-movement with the animals, intellectual freedom and responsibility with the angels, immortality with God. The ancient Greeks called man an "anthropos," which means a superior being, one not grovelling about the earth, but "with heaven-erected face" looking upward, having intellectual and moral ideals. Some of the world's thinkers have taken quite a narrow view of man. The eighteenth century French dictator in literature, Boileau, says: "Of all the animals which fly in the air, walk on the land, or swim in the seas, from Paris to Peru, from Japan to Rome, the most foolish animal in my opinion is man." Cowley, a pessimist of the seventeenth century, says: "Man is too near all kinds of beasts,—a fawning dog, a thieving fox, a robbing wolf, a dissembling crocodile, a treacherous decoy, and a rapacious vulture." Alexander Pope terms man a chaos of thought and passion, all confused; a lord of all things, yet a prey to all; the judge of truth, yet in endless error hurled; the glory, the jest and riddle of the world. Pascal dubs man a subject of contradiction, the glory and the scandal of the universe.

Let us not judge man according to the narrow standard of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which glorified art for art's sake and saw little beauty and grandeur outside of the material universe. It is true that natural and sinful man is a riddle to himself and the world, capable of the highest achievements as well as the most ignoble vices. Man is more than a mere animal. He is here on earth not to pamper his senses and gratify his low desires, but rather to let his higher nature hold sway. The body must be subject to the soul, the soul to its Maker.

The man who lives without law and justice is the most terrible of all animals, formidable both from his passions and his reason. Whilst his passionate cravings urge him to unspeakable evils, his reason often furnishes the means to accomplish them. It is the aim of religion and moral philosophy to teach man his true nature and to train him for God and society. They teach him how fraught with danger it is to show man that he approaches the beast in lowliness, and not to point out his real dignity as the created image of the uncreated God. Being constantly aware of our lowliness without realizing our divine elevation is like losing our first love for the fresh, pure mountain atmosphere and scenery, to spend the rest of our days in the dark and gaseous mines of the earth. To pride ourselves on our lofty nature without a due apprehension of our weakness and possible meanness is like getting lost on the mountain top at the sudden approach of night. Enamored with the art of climbing, thrilled with the scenic beauty and grandeur on all sides, exhilarated by the clear, pure atmosphere, we pay no attention to the time of day. Suddenly we are aware of our desperate situation, doomed to a sitting posture on a narrow ledge, near our companions to whom we can communicate our woe, yet withal surrounded by black night and haunted with dreams of fear, if sleep we can, tied to a projecting rock. Imagine the peril of falling to sleep on the cold ledge with the possible danger of being lulled into insensibility and painlessly, unconsciously yielding to death. In climbing the mountain of virtue, man must be aware of similar dangers. In the world today men boast of their greatness, their mechanical progress and social betterment, but alas they fail to see their mental and moral drawbacks. Montaigne says it is ridiculous for a miserable and wretched creature, who is not so much as master of himself to call himself master of all things. He who knows only the least part of the world, how can he command the whole?

The true Christian view of man's dual nature is the only safe one to follow. Man is a creature of God. He was raised to a supernatural plane and destined for a supernatural end, heaven. Sin, original sin, intervened. Man fell from his high estate and only then did he become a prey of all things, a slave of his passions, a mass of confusion and contradiction, a chimera, a riddle unsolvable except in the light of Christian truth. God's mercy and kindness reinstated man to grace and friendship with Him. The death of Christ made it possible for man again to strive for and to merit everlasting life. Baptism frees us from the Devil's dominion and makes us children of God and heirs of heaven. The other sacraments and prayer, constantly applied, strengthen man in his hard upward fight for virtue. Christian teaching and education aim to subdue and train the human animal and make him amenable to law and order, to impress him with a sense of justice and virtue. The fear of eternal punishment restrains his evil tendencies, whilst the hope of eternal reward in the bosom of God incites and encourages him in his duties. Only the Christian religion views man in the right light and furnishes the proper aids for keeping the balance.

Like a new-born infant, man is by nature weak and dependent. He must seek help and protection from God. Although man is the crown of creation, he is far from being the master of his own destiny or the fashioner of his fate. The secret of success is the cooperation with society, as far as our material welfare is concerned; and the cooperation with God and His Church, as far as our soul is concerned. The man who tries to stand apart from society and religion is not wholly human. Aristotle says: "If anyone finds himself to be an individual who cannot live in society, or pretends he has need of only his own resources, do not consider him a member of humanity; he is a savage beast or a god."

Above all, man cannot ignore his spiritual nature and his supernatural end. Ruskin avows that the basest thought possible concerning man is that he has no spiritual nature. Carlyle declares: "We touch heaven when we lay our hands on a human body—We are the miracle of miracles—the great inscrutable mystery of God." Henry Giles, the scientist, avers: "Man is greater than a system of worlds. There is more mystery in the union of the soul with the physical than in the creation of the universe.'' Whately maintains: ''Man, considered not merely as an organized being, but also as a rational agent and a member of society is perhaps the most wonderfully contrived and to us the most interesting specimen of Divine Wisdom that we know.'' The bard of Avon pays this noble tribute to the dignity of man:

"What a piece of work is man:
How noble in reason, how admirable in faculties!
In action how like an angel!
In apprehension how like a god!
The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!"

Man's being is an act of God, his mind a thought of God, his free will a breath of God. Sir H. Davy in a poem written after recovery from a dangerous illness designates man as:

"A sacred spark created by His breath,
The immortal mind of man His image bears;
A spirit living amidst the forms of death,
Oppressed, but not subdued, by mortal cares."

Surely so noble a creature cannot be an automaton, a mere material machine, as some would have it. Surely such an elevated, intellectual and free creature, standing between the wonders of nature and nature's God, cannot utterly perish like the trees of the forest, or the birds of the air, or the beasts of the field. Was his existence, so exalted by the lavish profusion of divine gifts, to be limited to the narrow horizon of the present life, or is it to be extended to the shoreless ocean of eternity? It is true, man's nature is limited, his powers of body and soul are finite. But nothing finite here below can satisfy his mind and heart. Man possesses an intellect whose capacity no earthly knowledge can fill. Man has a heart and will, whose aspirations no temporal good can completely gratify. What then shall be the perfect object of his knowledge? What shall be the center of his love? To answer these questions is to solve the problem of life. Despite the boasted progress of modern civilization, despite the giant strides of the human intellect in every sphere of secular knowledge and in every field of scientific research, what would we know even in the 20th century, of our origin, of our supernatural *destiny*, of the *purpose and meaning* of our brief, checkered existence in this world, of the Eternity that awaits us beyond the tomb, that mysterious bourn which we are continually approaching, hurried on by the irresistible currents of time; what, I ask, should we know of these momentous questions without the search-light of heavenly faith? Like a beacon set upon the mountain top to guide the tempest-tossed mariner into the harbor of safety, faith dispels from the human mind the clouds of error and deception, and points out to men with unerring certainty the path that leads from God to man and from man back to God. Amidst all the distractions, allurements, and enjoyments of life we must pause to ask ourselves: Whence have I come, whither shall I go? In other words, why am I here?

These are the questions so important as not to admit of comparison with any other. Science, literature, politics, commerce and all other worldly interests pale into insignificance, when set side by side with the momentous inquiry regarding man's destiny in the world to come. This stupendous consideration faces man at every turn of life, whether believer or unbeliever, Christian or Pagan, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Infidel, he must confront it. It relentlessly pursues him through every stage of his earthly career; its stern and unfaltering voice can not be stifled by debauchery nor silenced by rebuke. No matter how a man may try to evade or ignore it, it watches and waits for him at the very brink of the grave, on the threshold of eternity. As the shadows and phantoms of this world disappear from the horizon of his earthly sojourn, there looms up the significant question: After death, whither shall I go and what shall be my unchangeable allotment in eternity? God's decree, depending indeed on man's faith and conduct, once given, is irrevocable. No appeal, no remedy any longer. Hence no reasonable person will dare leave these questions unanswered.

THE ANSWER

Nowadays we go to specialists to solve our problems. In religion only do men follow untrained guides. Is there any cogent reason for forming religious opinions from snappy stories by professional journalists based on interviews with scientists, inventors, labor leaders, successful business men, athletic idols or movie stars? Why not go to the divinely established source of spiritual information and guidance? God's Church, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, is the infallible teacher and guide in faith and morals (Matt. 28. 18–20). God is our final end. He is Supreme Truth, the object of our intellect. He is Absolute Good, the object of our will. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless, until they find repose in Thee" ("Confessions of St. Augustine," Book I, Chap. 1). In one word, God created me, redeemed me, sanctifies me, He upholds and directs me. He enables me to become happy with Him for endless ages. Happy we, if we keep in mind the words of the inspired singer and direct our daily lives toward God our final end. "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me—For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away. Thou art the God of my heart and the God that is my portion forever" (Ps. 15. 5; Ps. 72. 26).

When we die we may say, as many before us have said, "I have finished my work"; we cannot say, "I have finished my life." The tomb closes on the twilight, it opens on the dawn. The grave is not a blind alley, but a thoroughfare to a better and happier land. As we grow older rising toward the sky, we feel God's sunshine on our heads. Death comes to cut down the stem of our earthly life and lo there springs up a new and stronger shoot in the life beyond. The earth has given its generous sap, heaven now matures and ripens the fruit of joy and happiness. If winter is on our head, eternal spring is in our hearts. We feel the future life, we know it, we shall experience it. Did not Christ promise to give it out of the abundance of his own endless life?

St. Ignatius Loyola says that a right understanding of the end of man is the foundation of spiritual science. Every science rests on some fundamental truth. As a seed contains within itself all the elements of the entire tree, so does the knowledge of man's ultimate purpose in life contain the sum of his knowledge and happiness. The tree is rooted firmly in the ground, whence it derives its nourishment. The human soul is rooted in God. The tree produces buds and flowers and fruits. Man blossoms forth in divine faith and hope. He bears fruit in divine love, fructified by divine grace. The glorification of the tree is found in its fruits. Man's ultimate glorification is the glorification he took from himself to give unto God. The tree lives, grows, blossoms only to bear fruit. Man lives, grows, flourishes only to love and glorify God his final end. The tree sacrifices its bark, its leaves and blossoms for the sake of fruit. Man must sacrifice, if need be, the particular ends of life to the one ultimate end: the glorification of God by a virtuous life.

Without this subordination of the particular purposes in life to the one final end there can be no science of religion. Before Newton discovered the law of gravitation, physics was not a complete and correlated science but only an assemblage of facts. A heap of cement blocks, bricks, lumber, steel beams and bars, sacks of lime and cement do not constitute a house, until they are so arranged and placed in their proper positions to form a complete and harmonious whole. In the same way the dictionaries and encyclopedias of learning concerning God and man do not establish the science of religion. Science implies correlated knowledge; religion as a science needs a master-principle which clearly expresses man's relations to God and man's ultimate purpose in life. Upon this chief truth rests the whole structure of the higher life. In one sentence it may be summed up: Man was created to know God, to love Him, serve Him, to obey Him before all other masters, in order to be happy with Him forever.

God created everything for His own glory and for the ultimate good of His creatures. He wishes to share with us His own superabundant knowledge and happiness. Love is expansive and desires to multiply its graces and blessings, its powers and its fruits. Himself in need of nothing, God nevertheless craves our love and service as the one requisite of sharing His knowledge and His happiness.

Only His rational creatures, men and angels, can be conscious sharers of God's benevolent love, only they can realize their proper place in creation, only they can enter, as it were, into the very designs and plans of God and freely cooperate with Him in attaining their ultimate end, the beatific knowledge and beatific love in heaven, a happiness so supreme, that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart ever been able to conceive its sublimity and grandeur. "I am thy reward exceeding great" (Gen. 15. 1). Those of us who glorify God, serving Him faithfully until the end crowns our labor, He will invite with open arms: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25. 21).

Only rational creatures can, to some extent, comprehend the great love shown to man in the Creation of the world, in the Redemption on the Cross, in the establishment of a divinely guided Church, in the projection of His divine life here upon earth by the seven wonderful mysteries of love, the sacraments, in the abiding presence of the God-man as a sacrament and sacrifice until the end of time, in the divine companionship of Jesus Christ, which is an aid to virtue and a foretaste of heaven's bliss. Only rational creatures, therefore, can dedicate their lives unto His greater honor and glory, as did the saints and heroes of God in spite of every obstacle and difficulty. We cannot choose for the motto of our life one more appropriate than that selected by St. Ignatius: "For the greater glory of God." Precisely by accomplishing this end does man make himself worthy of glorification in everlasting bliss. "Whosoever shall glorify me," saith the Lord, "him will I glorify" (1 Kings 2. 30).

Only the rational creature can subordinate the primary end of life to the secondary. Whether man loves and serves God or whether, abusing his free will, he serves and glorifies creatures instead; he cannot deprive God of His honor. He merely robs himself of merit and glory, consigning himself to the realm of justice with the devil and his cohorts in unending torments. He forgoes the empire of God's love as soon as he freely chooses to glorify the creature in preference to the Creator. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself; the wicked also for the evil day" (Proverbs 16. 4).

CHAPTER VI

CHRIST OUR TEACHER

"He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3. 36).

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He came to give us life and life abundantly. In the sixth chapter of St. John, Christ clearly reveals Himself as sent from on high to give all men the light of faith. "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. This is the will of the Father who sent me; that of all that he hath given me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again in the last day, and this is the will of my Father that sent me; that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in Him, may have life everlasting. No man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him. It is written in the prophets: 'And they shall all be taught of God' " (John 6. 35–45). But, alas, it is also written: "He came unto his own and his own received him not, but as many as received him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them who believe in his name, who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1. 11 ff).

These texts of Holy Scripture show that Christ is the sunlight of truth for man's groping intellect. The moon with its reflected light cannot supplant the sun. No more can a man-made religion take the place of the divine revelation of Christ. Only God can give us authentic knowledge of Himself and of our relations to Him. Man was created by God and for God, hence he must be taught and led and governed by God.

Faith, in the Light of History

Even before Christ came to bless this earth with His divine presence, His words of eternal life, His works of superhuman love and power, the pagan Cicero described the transcendent happiness that would fall to the lot of man, were it granted him to behold a living ideal in human flesh: ''Oh! what a joy and consolation to possess a divine teacher whose lessons of unchanging truth would remove from us the soul-destroying confusion of ever-changing human opinions and vagaries, whose precepts of life would safeguard us against the caprice of the fickle human heart.''

Another philosopher, Plato, voiced the idea that only a god come to earth could conduct mankind out of its ever-deepening misery. God has come to earth in the person of Jesus Christ. Every page of the New Testament glistens with His divine personality and His divine mission of teaching and saving mankind. The words that flowed from His lips were words of truth and power. The deeds He wrought in healing and helping men stand unparalleled in history. Compared with Christ as teacher and healer and wonder-worker, all others pale into insignificance. Both friend and foe, whether simple or wise, were compelled to admiration by His teaching and His power over men and things. Nicodemus, the learned Pharisee, came to Jesus by night to learn from Him: ''Rabbi, we know that thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which thou dost, unless God be with him'' (John 3. 2).

Even his enemies, having heard of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, gathered a council and said, ''What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let him alone so, all will believe in him; and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation.'' And again the Pharisees said: ''Behold the whole world is gone after Him'' (John 11. 47 and 48; 12. 19). Caiphas, by inspiration, told them it was expedient that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not. It was expedient for him to gather together into one the children of God that were dispersed, nevertheless from that day their envy sought revenge in treachery (John 11. 50 ff). About one month later, with the help of Judas, they apprehended Him and put Him to death. The guards placed near the tomb were to prove Jesus a false prophet and to prevent the disciples from stealing the body. To their chagrin, Christ came forth glorious and triumphant from the closed sepulchre. The wide-awake guards fell to the ground, dazed and bewildered. In spite of all the efforts of the enemies of religion, ancient and modern, to discredit the Gospel narrative, no other period of Christian history has so well withstood the blows of destructive criticism as the lifetime of Jesus here on earth. Many a fond hero has fallen, many a favorite myth has been exploded, but the sublime figure of Jesus Christ, the God-man, has held its undiminished proportions through the centuries, while the splendor of historic certainty surrounding Him is constantly enhanced.

No man can destroy Christ; no man can turn the world away from the faith of Christ. Many unavailing and abortive attempts have been made. In the 4th century one-half of the world awoke to find itself Arian, denying the divinity of Christ. Nestorianism tried to substitute a human personality for the divine. Monophysitism attempted to blend the human with the divine nature of Christ. Much damage was done to the faith by the heresies of Wickcliffe and Huss in the 14th century. The whole world was in a state of unrest, the papacy and the Catholic discipline had been weakened by the "Babylonian Captivity" of the Popes in Avignon, France, for seventy long years. Followed the great Western schism when for thirty years the Popes of Rome had to struggle against six pretenders or anti-popes. Then Luther stirred up the Peasants' Revolt in Germany and, aided by the princes and secular power (promised their share of the spoils), brought on the Protestant Revolt against the Church. In the different countries of northern Europe the Protestants grew rich on Church lands and convent-properties which they robbed. Many dissatisfied elements went over to the new man-made religions, because they appealed more to men's passions. In emphasizing faith to the detriment of morals, Luther brought on the destruction of both, "Believe bravely but sin more bravely." "Interpret the Bible according to your own light." "Original sin totally corrupted man's nature and left him a slave of Satan until Christ covers up his sins." "Salvation by faith alone." These false principles wrought deadly havoc upon faith as well as upon morals. Melanchton writes: "All the waters of the Elbe would not yield me tears sufficient to weep for the miseries caused by the Reformation'' (''Epistles,'' Bk. IV, ep. 100). Luther himself lived to see and deplore the decadence. In a sermon he is said to have uttered words like these: ''God knows how painful it is for us to acknowledge that before the advent of Our Gospel everything was peaceful and quiet. Now all things are in a ferment, the whole world agitated and turned topsy turvy. When the worldling hears it, he is scandalized at the disobedience of subjects to the governments, rebellion, wars, pestilence, destruction of kingdoms and countries, untold misery as the result of the doctrine of the Gospel.'' (Compare with ''Facts about Luther,'' by Monsignor Patrick O'Hare, page 23. See Doellinger: ''Reformation,'' Vol. 1, pp. 285–290; Vol. III, pp. 246 and 259). Surely the world learned the lessons of insubordination and rebellion only too readily. Civil powers too learned the unholy policy of subjugating the Church to their own devices. The breach caused by Luther's wounded pride and his appeal to the lowest elements has not yet been healed.

The devastating work was continued by the freethinkers of the 18th century and the encyclopedists of the French Revolution, Diderot, D'Alembert, Rousseau and Voltaire. Diderot aimed at strangling the last king with the entrails of the last priest. Voltaire boasted that whereas it took ''twelve men'' to establish Christianity, he himself could destroy it. He tried to carry out his destructive work by ridicule and mockery. His vaunting boast died with him.

The French Revolution failed to substitute the goddess of reason for the God of Christianity. Well might the God-haters and faith-destroyers admit with Julian the Apostate: ''O Galilean, thou hast conquered!''

These unhappy and disappointed men have in their day caused evil greater than they could have foreseen; they themselves have gone to an unhonored grave, their shame surviving them, their failure evident to all lovers of truth. The cause of Christ the God-man and His holy faith stand like the adamantine rock, firm and immovable as in the days of her divine Founder. The Catholic Church moves on gloriously, unconquerable, the Bride of Christ, the glory of her friends, the reproach of her enemies, the hope and light of the world.

Rev. Chas. Edward Stowe, a Congregationalist and a nephew of the famous orator, Henry Ward Beecher, writes: ''Our Puritan Fathers would never have made the break with Catholic Christianity, could they have foreseen, as a result thereof, the Christless, moribund, frigid, fruitless Protestantism that can contribute neither warmth, life, inspiration nor power, to lift us above the weight and weariness of sin. The full, rich, glorious Christ of Catholic Christianity has been dragged from His throne by these ''advanced'' thinkers and reduced to beggary. A pale, bloodless, emaciated Syrian ghost still dimly haunts the icy corridors of 20th century Protestantism, from which the doom of His final exclusion has already been spoken.

''Then in their boundless arrogance and self-assertion, they turn upon those of us who still cry with St. Thomas before the Risen One, ''My Lord and My God'' and tell us there is no middle ground between their own vague and sterile rationalism and the Roman Catholic Church. If this be so, then for me, most gratefully and lovingly, I turn to the Church of Rome as a homeless, houseless wanderer to a home in a continuing city.

''We are hungry for God, yes for the living God and hence so restless and dissatisfied. The husk of life's fruit is growing thicker and its meat thinner and drier every day for the vast majority of our people. In many and important respects, life was brighter in the so called ''Dark Ages'' than it is today. The seamless robe of Christ is rent into hideous fragments and trampled into the dirt'' (culled from a clipping).

History piles up the evidence. Cicero's prophecy in the light of nineteen centuries of history shows the world's need of God come to earth, to teach us the truth and guide us aright.

Modern moral conditions prove the truth of Plato's words that a God alone, come to earth, can lead mankind out of its ever deepening misery. Plato's remark was a deep and true reflection on the sad history of Paganism. Today a new Paganism has set in, which threatens even our most Catholic countries. An Austrian priest writes of the desperate financial condition: ''Alas, we merit no better fate, for the people are very unbelieving, forgetful of God and fond of pleasure. Our priests must wage a fierce war against this modern unbelief. The youth especially are foolish and corrupt. An entirely new generation must be trained. The intelligentsia are indifferent, yea, unbelieving. The public officials of my city are oblivious of God. They do not attend Mass. My God, what sufferings it causes me to see these educated unbelievers sit in their offices on Sunday and purposely compel the employees to work on Sundays and Holydays.'' The same is only too true of our own country (*Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 131, p. 197). In New York City alone 12,000 children are taught, from catechisms of atheism, that there is no God and that the doctrine and precepts of the Christian religion are absurdities (''Rebuilding a Lost Faith,'' p. 31). In the United States over 60,000,000 people are churchless and practically without religion. The Church at present has before it the supreme duty of stemming the tide of irreligion by restoring all things in Christ.

Faith, in the Light of Reason

''If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God which is greater, because He hath testified of His Son. . . . He that believeth in the Son of God hath the testimony of God in himself. He that hath the Son hath Life'' (1 John 5. 9, 10, 12). If we believe men, who are liable to err and deceive, surely we ought to believe God who can neither deceive nor be deceived. We believe men. From the cradle to the grave, from childhood to old age, we all practice human faith. We accept as true what our parents, teachers, scientists, lawyers, physicians, lecturers, orators and well-informed writers tell us. But in religion we wish to be our own teacher, our own lawyer and physician. In secular branches of learning we follow specialists, men of authority in their particular subject, but in religion we deny even the authority of God and impugn the divinely constituted teaching office in the Catholic Church. If we receive the testimony of men, that of God is certainly greater, because it is more trustworthy. We all must be taught of God (John 6. 45). God will have all men come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved (1 Tim. 2. 4).

In temporal things we are in need of human teachers, in spiritual matters God himself teaches and aids us. ''By grace you are saved through faith and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God'' (Eph. 2. 8), given to whom He sees fit. Refused to the proud intellectuals, it is vouchsafed to the humble. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.—No one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him" (Matt. 11. 25 and 27).

The fact that we cannot understand all the truths of faith is no reason for rejecting any of them. They have God the highest Truth for their author, not fallible men. If we cannot understand the mysteries in nature, which undeniably exist, how can we hope to fathom the God of nature or fully grasp the products of His all-embracing mind? If we are baffled by the mysterious union of body and soul, of mind and matter; by the mystery of life, of growth, of the change from food to blood; by the nature of electricity, of gravitation, of cold, heat and light, of physical attraction and of chemical processes; surely our mind must bow with profounder reverence and submission to the supernatural mysteries of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, the Immaculate Conception, the virginal motherhood, and many others. If in spite of all mysteries we maintain that our faith is reasonable, we mean that even though certain truths and tenets are above reason, they do not contradict reason. Divine truth cannot contradict natural truth, for truth is one, as God is one.

Pius IX wrote: "Reason and faith have no cause to fear each other, for each of them is equally derived from the same sole and immutable source of truth, God" (Qui Pluribus). The Vatican Council, in Chapter 4, declares: "Although faith is above reason, there can never be a real disagreement between them, because the same God who has revealed the mysteries and communicated faith, has also given to the human mind the natural light of reason, and we know God cannot contradict Himself, nor can truth ever be in contradiction with truth. Not only can faith and reason never be in discord but they even lend each other mutual help; right reason demonstrates the foundation of faith, and enlightened by the light of faith, reason develops the science of divine things; faith, on the other hand, frees and protects reason from error and enriches it with knowledge of many kinds."

Reason has not only its proper object distinct from faith, but even in matters of faith it plays an important role in banning superstition and quackery and in fostering true religious science. St. Paul admonishes: ''Despise not prophecies (teachings), but prove all things; hold fast that which is good'' (1 Thess. 5. 20 and 21). St. Augustine wrote: ''We could not even believe if we were not endowed with reason.'' St. Thomas: ''Reason would not believe, if it did not see that it is necessary to believe.'' Bourdaloue calls faith more than a simple acquiescence in belief or a mere submission of the intellect. If it were not a reasonable assent to the authority of the all-knowing Deity, it would not be a virtue but rather a superstition. ''Faith,'' says Bishop England, ''is not folly, it is not abject slavery of the mind, it is not visionary fanaticism, it is not irrational assent to unintelligible propositions; but it is believing upon the testimony of God what human reason could not discover, it is what a provident and wise Deity communicates for the information of our mind and the direction of our will.''

The foundation of faith, namely the existence of an omniscient and all-truthful God, can be shown by reason. With the aid of historical evidence, including sacred history, reason can establish the historical character and truth of the Scriptures; the divine origin and truth of Christianity; the spirituality, freedom and immortality of the Soul; the origin and destiny of man.

To that science which studies the ultimate cause or reason of things, namely, philosophy, belongs the task of coordinating the various truths of revelation by suitable theses and corollaries into a sacred science. Christian philosophy turns simple faith into the science of theology, the conclusions of which can be ascertained by everyone, according to each one's intelligence and education. Pope Leo XIII writes: ''It is a proved title of honor to Christian philosophy to be the bulwark of faith and the firm rampart of religion.'' In vindicating revelation against the attacks of pseudo science and sophistry, the Catholic Church has never crushed reason under the weight of authority. In fact her most eminent theologian, St. Thomas, considers authority the weakest of arguments. He begs to distinguish, however, between fallible human authority on the one hand and infallible divine authority on the other. The Church herself claims no authority to manufacture "truth" at will. She is merely the custodian, defender and interpreter of divinely revealed truths. She relies much on reason and Christian philosophy as an aid in her appointed task of preserving, defending and interpreting divine truth. She insists that once theology aided by Christian philosophy and sacred history have shown certain truths to have the seal of divine revelation, men must cease to dicker and doubt, and accept them without reserve or hesitation upon divine authority.

For the Christian philosopher and sacred historian, reason is indispensable in defending man's greatest treasure from the superstitious extravagances of the "faithful" as well as from the doubts and denials—which are unreasonable—of the infidel. Reason keeps away the cold blast of atheism and the hot currents of religiosity. Reason keeps religion from the desert wastes of indifference and the equatorial torrents of fanaticism. Sentimentality and emotionalism in religion run to extremes, reasonable faith keeps the golden mean.

For the convert, reason cooperates with divine grace in plowing the soil and preparing the field, wherein the divine Planter is to sow the seed of the supernatural life. Reason examines the motives of credibility, it sifts the evidence. It finds clear and unmistakable proofs that God has spoken and it concludes that man must hear.

CHAPTER VII

DIVINE FAITH

In the first instance, faith is a gratuitous, supernatural gift of God by the help of which we believe all that God has revealed and the Church teaches. In the second instance, faith is a habit, a virtue taking hold of God's gift and holding fast to God's truth constantly on the principle of His supreme truthfulness and authority. As a gift it is free and gratuitous. We cannot merit, but we can and must cooperate with it. This priceless gift of God is bestowed in Baptism. Faith is not acquired by reflection or study, although these are subsidiary aids, as we see in the lives of such converts as St. Paul, St. Augustine and Newman.

By the gift of faith we are, so to speak, engrafted upon the living vine which is Christ. "I am the vine and you are the branches." Faith, incorporating us with Christ, makes us members of His Church. St. Paul says: "As many of you as have been baptised in Christ, have put on Christ.—Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone . . . in whom you also are built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit" (Gal. 3. 27; Eph. 2. 19, 20, 22). Baptized into the faith, we become children of God, heirs of heaven, vessels of election.

Faith is the Christian's eye without which he cannot recognize Christ; the ear that heeds the words of Christ; the tongue, professing the name of Christ; the vital artery which draws its energy and power from the heart of Christ; the right hand to labor for Christ, the lungs that breathe the atmosphere of Christ.

Faith is the beginning of love. "Faith takes hold of

Christ, love keeps the grip. By faith Christ dwells in us, by love He operates within us. Faith is the nail that fastens us to Christ and love is the grace that drives it to a head." It is the beginning and foundation of every spiritual good.

As a body of divinely revealed truths, faith is the Wisdom of God come to earth to confound the wise and bring all minds and hearts unto the captivity of Christ. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "The Jews require signs (miracles), and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ Crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the *power of God* and the *wisdom of God.* For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God stronger than men" (1 Cor. 1. 22–25). The Catholic faith is indeed the wisdom of God in a world of ignorance and error, to "enlighten them who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." The Samaritan woman aptly represents the plight of those outside the sacred precincts of the true faith. She could not understand how Christ being a Jew (by race) could ask her to give Him to drink. He was thirsty indeed for her soul as He is for ours. He assures her and us all: "He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever: But the water that I will give him, shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting." May all those outside of the Church respond: "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw—I perceive that thou art a prophet" (John 4. 13, 14, 15, 19).

Faith is a divine light in the Soul, penetrating its deepest recesses with heavenly splendor. If Christ is the light of the world, His teaching is the light of the individual soul. With David, the faithful can truly say: "In thy light shall we see the light." Whereas the infidel walks in darkness, stumbling over his shadow, the Catholic walks in the light of Christ and is guided by the shadow of the cross, along which he treads his way carefully through life, lest he stumble and fall into the abyss of sin. Compared with the light of faith, human knowledge and science is but a smoking lantern. Faith is the sunlight of the spiritual universe, by whose aid we revel in perpetual daylight. Infidelity is like a solar eclipse, turning day into night. Without faith the most learned scientists know nothing about their supernatural origin and purpose in life. If we compare God to the sun, we may say that faith is the ether medium, transmitting the light of God to the human mind. Faith is the medium connecting this world with the next. To get a complete view of both worlds one must peer through the intervening darkness by the medium of divine faith. Faith might be called the highly magnified telescope enabling man to view the whole of life and death and eternity in its only true light. It enables us to get a good glimpse of heaven and behold at least the beginning of the mysteries of God. Now we see in a glass darkly, it is true, but is not dim vision far better than total blindness?

By the light of faith we know that God is our first beginning and our last end. God is our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our Teacher, our Model, our future Judge. In this life virtue should be our profession; and justice, our rule of life. Eternity is our expectation, heaven is our inheritance, our prospective happiness is union with God himself. Faith informs us that the greatest thing in this world is man, the greatest thing in man is the soul, the greatest thing in the soul is faith and grace, which entitles man to the possession of that bliss which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart conceived (Preface of Devivier-Sasia: "Christian Apologetics"). Without grace and faith, even the Holy Eucharist would avail us nothing. Hence we can possess no greater treasure, than a living, thriving, divinely pulsating faith. No wonder that St. Paul, contemplating this fact, burst forth in ecstatic enthusiasm: "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung that I may gain Christ" (Phil. 3. 8). St. John exclaims: "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called and should be the sons of God. Therefore, the world knoweth not us, because it knew not Him. Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3. 1–2).

Faith is a pearl of great price which the Divine Fisherman planted in our soul. Christ tells us in the parable that the man who learned of the great treasure in the field, sold all his possessions, in order to purchase the field and acquire the treasure. If we should be among the unhappy ones who do *not* possess the faith of Christ, we must risk and suffer all else to acquire it by prayer and good will on our part. If we do possess it, we must treasure it with the greatest care. Both the ancient and the modern martyrs gave up everything, even life itself, for the faith. Eleazar, the ninety-year-old Jew, was brought forward and ordered to eat swine's flesh, which was forbidden by the law. Through him, Antiochus hoped to draw the young Jews away from their religious practices. Moved by a false pity, some of his old friends attempted to persuade Eleazar to take meat that was lawful for him to eat, whilst pretending to eat, according to the king's command, of the unlawful. But considering the dignity of his age, the honor of his grey head and the good life he had led from childhood, he remained firm, realizing that it is far better to serve God than to please men. Fearing the justice of God rather than the cruelty of men, he was contented, at the cost of stripes and martyrdom, to be an example of virtue and fortitude to the whole nation. What an example for weak-kneed Christians, whose cowardice leads them to disregard the Friday law! (2 Mach. 6. 18–31).

In the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith we read a touching incident. In 1833 during a violent persecution vast numbers of Christians were put to death by the tyrant Minh-Menh, King of Tong-Quin and Cochin China. The outside world was astounded by the most heroic constancy in faith, shown even by children. One day a little boy of ten presented himself before the mandarin. On bended knee he begged him to cut his throat with a sabre so that he could go home to his own country. When the judge asked, "Where is your country?" the lad answered: "It is heaven—My parents have gone thither, and I desire to follow them. Give me a stroke with your sabre and send me to heaven." The admiring mandarin refused the request. This boy of ten understood his religion and valued his faith as the great treasure. He was willing, yea anxious, to follow his parents on the path of heroic faith and martyrdom.

The Necessity of Faith

"Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a Rewarder to them that seek Him" (Hebr. 11. 6). St. Luke by way of metaphor calls Jesus Christ the cornerstone of the spiritual edifice, adding: "Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4. 12; Ps. 117. 22).

Our Lord solemnly declared: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16. 16). The Council of Trent says: "Faith is the beginning of man's salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, without which it is impossible to please God and be numbered among His Children" (Sess. 6, Ch. 8). "Without faith it is impossible to be made just" (Sess. 6, Ch. 7).

A tree cannot thrive and bear fruit, unless it be firmly rooted in the soil whence it draws nourishment; neither can the soul of man live the life of grace and perform meritorious works, unless it be rooted in divine faith. A house cannot stand without a foundation, neither can the mansion of our soul stand without the foundation of divine faith.

Without faith, man is but a rational animal, not a child of God, nor an heir to heaven. Baptism and faith raise man above the mere natural existence to a supernatural plane of life and activity. They convert night into day. The light and warmth of the sun make the fields instinct with life. Sanctifying and actual grace are the spiritual light and warmth giving spiritual life. Man without faith is like a plant without sunlight. He carries within his bosom the germs of death. He cannot stand the storms of life. He cannot withstand the insect that attacks both trunk and fruit, the insect of sin.

Faith is absolutely necessary, because it is the life-giving principle, the very soul of religion. It is the interior source, the mother of all other virtues. From her fruitful womb they come forth gladsome and joyous, vigorous and healthy; to her breast they return like hungry babes seeking nourishment and strength; to her bosom they cling for shelter and protection.

It is faith animated by sanctifying grace that converts the ore of our daily actions into the gold coin of merit and heavenly reward. With the coin of faith, minted by God and stamped with His divine image, we sinners pay our debts to God and earn an eternal recompense for our least religious labors.

Examples of Heroic Faith

Both sacred and profane history teem with the most edifying models in faith. Abraham believed God and it was reputed to him unto justice. He believed that God would give him a son in his old age and multiply his seed as the stars of heaven. He trusted that God would furnish a sacrificial victim instead of his son Isaac, whom he was willing to offer, if God should actually demand it'' (Gen. 15. 6; ibid. 22. 5, 8, 12). St. Matthew relates four cures, the reward of faith: ''Jesus seeing their faith, (namely of the men who carried the paralytic) said to the man sick with the palsy: ''Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee—Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house'' (Matt. 9. 2–6). ''A certain ruler came up and adored Him saying: 'Lord my daughter is even now dead; but come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.' And when the multitude was put forth, He went in, took her by the hand. And the maid arose.'' The father's heroic faith is rewarded in the restoration of his daughter to life (Matt. 9. 18. 25). A woman suffering from an issue of blood for twelve years came behind our Lord and touched the hem of His garment. Urged by faith within, she said: ''If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed.'' Jesus turned to her, assuring her: ''Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.'' And the woman was cured from that hour (Matt. 9. 20–22). Again, two blind men were given their sight, because of their heroic faith. They had not seen Jesus nor beheld his wonderful cures, but yet they believed the testimony of others. They followed Jesus, crying out: ''Have mercy on us, O Son of David.'' Jesus said to them: ''Do you believe that I can do this unto you?'' They answered ''Yes, Lord.'' Touching their eyes, Jesus said: ''According to your faith, be it done unto you.'' And their eyes were opened (Matt. 9. 27–

30). In the four cures, the two former, namely the paralytic and the ruler's daughter, were healed because of the faith of their friends and father respectively, the two latter, namely the woman with an issue of blood and the two blind men, were cured on account of their own faith.

A more famous example is that of the Roman centurion, who though a Gentile by birth, was a devout convert to the Jewish religion and had built a synagogue for the Jews. Our Lord had come down from the mount of the beatitudes, healed a leper at the foot of the mountain and started on his way to Capharnaum. As He approached the town, there came to meet Him messengers from the Roman centurion, begging Jesus to heal his servant. When the ancients of the Jews returned with the news that Jesus was coming, he sent his friends to Him saying: "Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. For which cause neither did I think myself worthy to come to Thee; but say the word and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers: And I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it." Hearing this Jesus marveled: and turning about to the multitude that followed Him, He said: "Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith even in Israel" (Luke 7. 1–10; cf. Matt. 8. 5–13). Arriving home the friends found the servant cured.

Among the galaxy of glorious martyrs during the cruel reign of Queen Elizabeth of England, permit me to mention the noble John Rigby. Having been reduced to poverty, he was forced to become a servant in a gentleman's home and unhappily prevailed upon to frequent Protestant worship. Later on, he bitterly bewailed his past weakness and became reconciled to God through Father Jones, a prisoner for the Faith. Charged with being a Catholic, which he gladly acknowledged, he was condemned to death for the "treasonable" act of confessing to a priest. Sentenced to be "hung, cut down alive, boweled and quartered," he exclaimed: "Thanks be to God! It is but one death and a flea bite, compared with what my sweet Savior Jesus was pleased to suffer for my salvation." The more his enemies urged him to relinquish his faith in order to save his life, the more anxious was he to lose it for Christ and thereby save it unto life eternal. One day during his trial, the judge ordered shackles. He kissed them before they were riveted to his legs. Having signed them with the Sign of the Cross he stood and smiled for a little while, when lo they fell to the ground. ''Bind them tighter, for I esteem them as jewels too precious to be lost.'' This was a presage that his soul would soon be freed of his body. Two days later at the place of execution near the Thames River, he knelt down, recited aloud the Our Father, Hail Mary and the Act of Contrition. Mounting the cart, he kissed the rope around his neck, gave the executioner a coin as a token of generous forgiveness, saying, ''God forgive you, Jesus receive my soul,'' the instant before he was thrown down, disemboweled and quartered.

CHAPTER VIII

DANGERS TO FAITH

Probably no time in the history of Christianity were the dangers to faith more subtle than today. The enemies of Christ have learned underhand methods. There was a time when our country pinned its faith upon Christ. Now an increasing minority seek earthly nostrums, fake-beliefs, superstitions of all kinds. In an age called scientific, witness the vogue of occultism, spiritism, theosophism, Christian science, mental healing, psycho-analysis, Freudism, hereditary determinism. In a word naturalism under the guise of false science, false philosophy, false psychology and false religion. Materialism and pleasure-worship likewise lead millions away from Christ. At the International Philosophical Conference held at Harvard University in 1926 a paper was read making a strong plea for the transcendence of the mind over the merely physical (*Fortnightly Review,* Vol. 33, p. 459).

Indifferentism has extinguished the light of faith in millions of souls in America. Fifty-eight millions of nominal Protestants and perhaps ten millions of fallen away Catholics have succumbed to one or another form of indifferentism. Lukewarmness toward God, abetted by atheistic and bolshevistic propaganda, are like a cancer gnawing at the vitals of modern society. The doctrines of State supremacy and State paternalism bid fair to destroy respect for ecclesiastical authority, without which Christian faith cannot survive. Private interpretation of Holy Scripture, yielding gradually to a denial of God's word and God's law has for three centuries leveled its destructive blows at positive Christianity. Mixed marriages have likewise contributed their share to undermine the faith.

False Teachings

Children are denied the boon of Christian education. For ninety years our Youth has been subjected to godless education. Proselytizing agencies in the public school are at work. By free gifts of books, clothes, and sometimes even the necessities of life, Catholic children especially among the foreign elements are tempted to frequent godless schools. Perverted bible-histories are donated to Catholic children attending these schools. The home is likewise infected. Young men and women are inveigled into secret societies where faith is ridiculed and impugned. Evil companions, atheists, scoffers, agnostics, liberals, immoral companions, all add their quota to delinquency in faith.

Catholic young men and women attending secular institutions of learning, especially the colleges and universities, run great danger of losing their faith. The number who actually lose their Christian moorings is far greater than even priests imagine (see *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 34, pp. 433–435). We have no statistics for the actual losses, but we know aproximately the number who run this risk. Today there are about

70,000 Catholic students in secular colleges and universities.
300,000 Catholic students in secular high schools.
2,500,000 Catholic students in public grade schools.
2,870,000 Catholic students in secular institutions.

over against

80,000 Catholic students in Catholic colleges and universities.
204,815 Catholic students in Catholic high schools.
2,138,204 Catholic students in Catholic grade schools.
2,423,019 Catholic students in Catholic institutions.

This means that over two and three-fourths millions of Catholic young men and women, in the formative period of life, when religious principles mean sound morality and stable character, are sowing the seeds of moral misfortune and are exposed to the danger of loss of faith. Whilst the Catholic children in Catholic high schools are continuing their study of religion, those outside in public and secular high schools are unconsciously learning to consider religion as not worth learning. They are learning other things also. Co-education from the ages of fifteen to twenty and from twenty to twenty-four is reaping results often deplorable. The American experiment is not looked on abroad with favor, nor can Catholics approve of it especially if it is not buttressed by religious training. Co-education is bad enough, even at times deplorable, in Catholic institutions; but it has proven by dear experience to be much worse in secular high schools.

As to *elementary* education, scarcely one-half of our Catholic children are placed in parochial schools. The proportion of non-Catholic children of elementary school age in religious schools is negligible, perhaps less than five percent. Over 15,000,000 non-Catholic children and about 2,500,000 Catholic children from seven to fifteen are deprived of a thorough grounding in religious principles and religious belief. Whether these two and one-half milion ever receive a higher education or not, their religious life will amount to very little. We are practically alone (the Lutherans and a few other religious bodies are imitating us) in giving our children the rudiments of religion. Walter S. Athern in a radio speech on ''Character Building in a Democracy'' cited figures compiled by the Institute of Religious and Social Research as follows:

''There are in the United States, over 58,000,000 people nominally Protestant, who are not identified in any way with any Church—There are over 27,000,000 American children and youth, nominally Protestant, under twenty-five years of age, who are not enrolled in Sunday school or cradle roll department and who receive no formal or systematic religious instructions. There are 8,000,000 American children, nominally Protestant, under ten years of age, who are growing up in non-Church homes. Taking the country as a whole, seven out of every ten children and youth under twenty-five are not being touched in any way by the religious-educational program of any Church.''

''How long may a nation endure, seven out of ten of whose children receive no religious and moral sanctions upon which its democratic institutions rest?'' If non-religious training is a menace to democracy, it is because of the decay of faith in Jesus Christ. A Church that cannot save its own children can never save the world, is the truth that Mr. Athern would have ''burned into the minds of the leadership of the Protestant Church in America.''

We should never forget Washington's Farewell Address, in which he says: ''Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens.''

There is no cogent reason why, at least in our cities, the children could not be allotted time for religion during the school hours. Competent religious teachers could be secured from the various religious bodies to instruct classes arranged according to their faith. If volunteers from this religious teaching staff could not be obtained gratis, they could be paid by their respective Churches or congregations. A half hour should be added to the school curriculum, to allow for this *daily* religious class. In this way fair-minded non-Catholics should be glad to cooperate with the Church in stemming the rising tide of irreligion, skepticism, mockery of holy things, false ethical principles and standards, that threaten the future stability of our Country. If the pagan philosopher Plato realized that only a God come to earth can lead mankind out of its ever-deepening misery, we Christians of the twentieth century ought to realize that our public school curriculum is inadequate from a religious viewpoint. If Cicero realized what a joy and consolation it would be to have a divine teacher to remove the soul-destroying confusion of ever-changing opinions and vagaries, whose precepts of life would safeguard us from the caprices of fickle human heart, what a shame for us of the twentieth century to condemn our own children and future generations to such soul-destroying confusion of ever-changing opinions and standards in religion. This is what we are doing, when we withhold from them the doctrinal and moral teaching of Jesus Christ, the Divine Teacher.

Evil Companions and Secret Societies

The choice of friends and companions is another important matter, often involving our faith. Self-preservation counsels us to shun the company of atheists, scoffers, rabid bigots and open enemies of the Church, especially such as belong to secret societies that plot the ruin of the Church and endanger the safety of the State. We never make any lasting and permanent gains by hobnobbing with our enemies. Look at France, Portugal, Russia, Mexico! How they bleed because they are under the ruthless heel of an obnoxious secret Society, a state within a state, a "super" state holding the reins of tyranny; and yet some of our Catholic societies and Catholic individuals are constantly hobnobbing with the Freemasons and other secret societies. We candidly admit that in the Blue Lodges of America there are very many knife and fork Masons, Masons only in name and for business purposes, who have very little sympathy for the anti-clerical and revolutionary cliques of the Grand Orient. On the other hand we know that Scottish Rite Masonry, or some of its representatives at least, were in active sympathy with Portes Gil and Calles, since they publicly praised and encouraged the anti-Catholic campaign of persecution and bloodshed in Mexico. The anti-parochial school fight was to a large extent fostered by the Freemasons of the Scottish Rite, not only in Oregon and Michigan but also in several other states. They seem to be among the prime-movers in certain localities to keep Catholics out of public office and off the teaching staffs in public schools. Their last-minute condemnation of the Ku Klux Klan lacked the ring of sincerity, since in many localities throughout the country they pursued very similar policies against Catholics. They were too clever to oppose the wealthy Jew. They are too clever to carry out their program as publicly and brazenly as did the Ku Klux Klan.

The Scottish Rite Jurisdictions of two Southern states and of two Eastern states and of the District of Columbia are formally united with the Grand Orient. Hence one in sympathy and one as far as aims and purposes go. (See brochure of Catholic Truth Society: "American Freemasonry and Catholic Education").

Even those fair-minded American Masons who deprecate the anti-clerical, revolutionary and political practices of Latin Masonry, do so, it would seem, out of sympathy for their mistaken policies. Two recent declarations are cases in point.

The *Square and the Compass,* a Denver Masonic Journal, deplores the anti-clerical and revolutionary tendencies, not so much because these things are destructive of religion and government, but in as far as they constitute a

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peril to Masonry. This seems evident from the title of the article: "A Peril to Masonry," in which the writer, among other things, says: "We of the United States—even the best informed of us—have little conception of what goes by the name of Masonry in France, Italy, Portugal, or Latin America." Clever as he is, the writer does not tell us the reason why Masonry is much worse in these Catholic countries than in the Anglo-Saxon and predominantly Protestant countries, namely the United States, Great Britain, Norway and Sweden. To the present writer the reason seems clearly one of affinity. Masonry and Catholicism are at opposite poles to each other as naturalism is to supernaturalism, as self-worship is to self-denial, as materialism is to religion, as pragmatism is to morality. Protestantism, which is gradually drifting into rationalism, blends with the naturalistic religion of Masonry. The Anglo-Saxons or Nordics, considering themselves superior to the rest of the world, would naturally join hands with Big Business and Super-Governments. The Latins, content to be children of God, have been more active in the promotion of supernatural religion and of single standard morality. The Latin hates hypocrisy and sham and declines posing as a moral teacher. Hence the opposition of Masonry to the established religion and established government in the so-called Catholic countries. Even the above-quoted Masonic journal, deprecating the cry of persecution, indirectly justifies Mussolini and the Church in defending themselves against Masonry: "In such countries, instead of Masonry being a teacher of morals (as if it were such in United States and Northern Europe!) and a support of the legally constituted authorities, it is generally acknowledged to be a secret, oath-bound, and anti-clerical, revolutionary society and usually opposed to the established government." When the Italian clique of super-government was ousted by Mussolini, they deserved it richly and had no reason to complain. Their brothers in America cut their own throat by howling and whimpering like persecuted underdogs.

Another Masonic authority on Masonry abroad, Brother Ossian Lang, Grand Historian of the Grand Lodge of New York, deprecated the ill-timed and ineffective demand on the Secretary of State "to protect the Brother Masons of

Italy'' made by one of the Concordant Bodies, writes: ''Italian Masonry has acquired the reputation of being essentially an anti-clerical, secret, political organization, and so far as the public is concerned, functions chiefly as such. It savors more or less of atheism, seemingly always pursuing political ends. Proclamations announcing the position of the Grand Orient concerning legislative policies were posted in public places, whenever an important political move was under way.'' No wonder that Facismo, taking the reins of government, did away with the ''offices held by trouble-making Masons.'' Mussolini, once a radical himself, realized that the only way to establish just and efficient government was to get rid of the trouble-making super-government which had imposed its revolutionary, anti-clerical, and even atheistic whims too long upon a genial nation. (See article: ''Masonry in Italy,'' quoted in *Daily American Tribune,* March, 1928).

American Masonry, it is true, has not openly followed the policies of the Grand Orient of Europe and Latin America, but it has indirectly and secretly opposed Catholic institutions and Catholic Doctrine. Anglo-Saxon Masonry has learned, from the open blunders of its European brethren, to follow milder, more secret and indirect policies to attain similar ends. In fairness, we add that this is true of certain groups, but not, as far as we know, of all American groups or of all individuals in the hostile groups.

We are almost clubbed to death by fraternal clubs. Why must some of us join such clubs that are only feeders and sycophants of the Masons? There is positively no convincing reason why Catholics or Christians of any shade or color should lend their money and influence to any organization that is not positively Christian in principle and in practice. To keep in touch with the latest information on secret societies, educated Christians should read the *Fortnightly Review,* edited by Arthur Preuss, who has also compiled a dictionary of secret societies and written a book on American Freemasonry.

Freemasonry denies all supernatural religion and is purely a naturalistic substitute for Christianity. Can any intelligent Christian subscribe to a system that totally denies the divinity of Christ and all supernatural religion? Can any honest and fair-minded citizen subscribe to the political tenets of a state within a state, a secret political machine manipulating a servile state according to its whims and fancies? Christians who carry water on both shoulders and who hobnob with enemies of the Church might ponder the fable of the Eagle and the Arrow. A soaring eagle, pierced by an arrow, fluttered to earth, its life blood streaming forth. The arrow had been plumed with an eagle's feather, to steer it straight. ''Alas,'' it cried, ''we often give our enemies the means to our destruction.''

In principles and in practice Christians ought to shun all companionship that tends to exercise a detrimental influence upon their sacred beliefs. We cannot, as a rule, influence or reform atheists, scoffers and naturalists. Only exceptional characters can withstand the evil influence and come forth unscathed. How then can the common run of simple folk hope to escape without serious loss? There ensues an attitude of doubt concerning the divine mysteries and a spirit of indifference towards religious practices. We must be on our guard even with well-meaning friends of another faith. Human respect may tempt some of us to omit our most sacred duties. If we are lukewarm and indifferent already, how easily does human respect, fear of ridicule, or some such bugbear creep into our path to block our way to Sunday Mass, to frequent confession and Holy Communion! How easily may it lead us away from daily prayer and the Friday Law! Our friends do not object to our religious convictions, nor do they wish to be responsible for our delinquencies. The weaker we are in this regard and the more inclined to human respect and cowardice, the less should we associate intimately with non-Catholics. Our faith dare not suffer because of human friendship or personal feelings. On the contrary, Catholics ought to be so strong in faith and religious practice as to exercise a wholesome influence on non-Catholic friends.

Profession of Faith

To do this we must not only lead exemplary lives but likewise, when occasion demands, openly and fearlessly profess the faith. If the honor of God or the welfare of souls require it, one must openly profess his allegiance to

Christ. How many spineless Catholics we have who live in endless fear of being detected, as if they had to apologize for the privilege of following Christ.

One day Jesus gave sight to a man born blind. This occurrence brings out in bold relief three classes of people: the skeptical Jews, the time-serving and more or less indifferent parents, and the simple but sincere beggar. The unbelieving Pharisees would rather have recourse to all sorts of subterfuges than accept the simple facts of his blindness and the consequent cure. They believed neither the man himself nor his neighbors nor his parents, but obstinately clung to their preconceived views. When confounded by the illiterate beggar, they pretended to follow Moses, whom they preferred to Christ, the God-man; they insulted the man who would convince them of the truth and cast him out as unworthy of their tolerance.

The parents, afraid of testifying to the whole truth, gave an evasive answer. "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: But how he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not; ask himself: he is of age, let him speak for himself. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9. 20–22). Here we see exemplified the moral cowards, indifferent in faith, spineless in action. Their number today is legion.

What a refreshing contrast is the simple, courageous faith of the poor beggar who had felt the power of Christ in the miraculous cure. When asked by his neighbors how his eyes were opened, he answered: "That man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe and wash. And I went, I washed and I see." With admirable directness he repeated his unevasive answer to the Pharisees: "He put clay upon my eyes and I washed and I see." When they accused Jesus of being a sinner for healing him on the Sabbath, and insulted Our Lord by putting greater faith in Moses, the beggar confounded their obstinacy by a marvelous profession of faith: "From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, he could not do anything" (of this nature) (John 9. 30).

What a profound profession of faith by one who up to that very day had not even seen Jesus, but only heard of Him and now experienced his healing power! When the enraged Jews insultingly cast him out, Jesus came to instruct him further. No sooner had Jesus told him He is the Son of God, the beggar fell upon his knees, adored, saying: "I believe, Lord." How few born outside of the true Church are half so eager to learn the truth? When Jesus put the question: Dost thou believe in the Son of God, our answer ought to be that of the poor beggar craving for the truth: "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in Him?" Jesus answers: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me may not remain in darkness. And if any man hear my words and keep them not, I do not judge him: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that despiseth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12. 46–47).

"So great has the destructive influence of an evil press become to the people, that even governments have felt obliged to legislate concerning it. Germany has enacted an elaborate set of regulations regarding printing and distribution of bad literature. England has lately taken very definite action against the destructive influence of the press upon public morals. A law was adopted in the Lower House, which ordains that in future nothing indecent in connection with judicial procedure may be published; and severe penalties are attached to the law for all connected with its violation, owners, editors, printers, and publishers. The drastic action of the Italian government regarding the press is as interesting as it is conspicuous today."—VITUS STOLL, on the Catholic Press, Series in *Daily American Tribune.*

Ireland has appointed an Evil Literature Commission, which will likely become a permanent institution, to devise ways and means of keeping out of the country—as yet comparatively clean—all obscene literature and contraceptive appliances.

CHAPTER IX

COMMERCIALIZED JOURNALISM

The paramount importance of the press cannot be overestimated in modern times. To a very great extent the marvellous growth, the phenomenal expansion of our cities, states and nations is due to the widespread influence of our daily and periodical press.

The Power of the Press

For many people, the secular newspaper and magazine furnish the only food for thought and conversation. It is unfortunately true that thousands of Americans read nothing but the daily paper, or occasionally a frivolous novel. Need we wonder how little they know and how gullible they are? At the club, at the store, in the shop, on the train, in the home they echo the thoughts and ideals forged by the newspaper. It apparently does their thinking for them. The newspaper is for them not only a thinking machine, an advisor, a teacher and guide, but also a "gospel that knows no unbelievers, a god that knows no atheists." They may at times poke fun at the paper, yet deep down in their hearts they are slaves to its banal message and powerful influence.

Money is the power behind the press. To a large extent the arts and sciences are commercialized. Spiritual and educational ideals, religious and moral values are subordinated to pelf. Hence wealth, not brains; the machine, not the mind; form and mold public opinion. In an article entitled: "The Shame of a Venal Press," the Central Bureau of the Central Society quotes a number of documents showing that "for almost twenty years the leading papers of Paris were in the employ of the Russian government. In 1905 the Czar's government spent 4,000,000 francs on the kept press of the French metropolis and it continued to subsidize it intermittently until it was swept away by the Revolution of 1917—almost every Parisian journal of any importance was fed Russian rubles in 1905. On January 15, 1916, at Petrograd a contract was made and signed, selling the French Press to Russian gold. It seems that *Le Temps* received 150,000 francs in advance in August, 1916, for being entirely at Russia's services.'' In this way other French papers also helped to put across the loans to Russia. The well-known Catholic daily, *La Croix,* was untainted.

The German press is likewise shown to have been venal. In a secret Communication from the German ambassador at Vienna, Von Tschirshky, to the Imperial Chancellor on July 22, 1914, we read: ''As far as Italy is concerned, Herr von Merey is authorized to make use of any sum of money he deems necessary.'' The German ambassador at Vienna merely reported the result of a discussion with an Austrian statesman on the necessity of influencing the foreign press of Roumania and Italy in favor of Germany.

In England, the *London Times* and the *London Daily Telegraph* also felt the touch of the Czar's rubles (Louis S. Gannett on the ''Secret Corruption of the French Press,'' in *The Nation,* February 6, 1924).

In our country, as every one knows, the same evil exists, although our secular dailies are perhaps not subject to the crass corruption as obtains in France. The conservative Mr. Bonaparte, late Attorney General of Theodore Roosevelt's administration, stated that our dailies were subservient to the big interests. Do we not all remember how our press multiplied the few advocates for world war into millions of workers and billions of dollars? Do we not recall how the Press in our country put across a travesty so vile as the ''Miracle?'' Unfortunately the venal spirit of Bismarck, Napoleon the Third, Poincare, Rivet, Kerensky, von Tschirshky, still lives.

Filth on the News Stands

An outstanding problem today is to purge the news stands of the ever-increasing flood of printed filth and photographic smut. Frank Kent, writing in the *Independent,* of Boston, maintains that in literary lewdness we have taken the lead away from the French. There is no longer any occasion for foul-minded people to smuggle in Parisian journals. In addition to the French originals and translations on the public market we have developed a great crop of smut peculiarly our own. The news stands even in smaller towns reek with obscene pictures and foul stories. In Fairmont, West Virginia, Kent informs us, one dealer disposes of 2200 copies of every issue of a single monthly devoted exclusively to stories of sex experiences and the nude in art. In Steubenville, Ohio, out of 110 periodicals on sale in a single store sixty were unfit to read, because they were out-and-out of a prurient type or bordered on the sensual. The same is true in other towns and cities, especially New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia and Newark.

Candid news dealers admit that the demand for obscene literature is enormous, in fact insatiable. The more this abnormal appetite is fed, the more ravenous it becomes and the more it craves for every similar periodical in sight. In three months eighteen new ventures in the lewd have been successfully launched. Mr. Kent says these frankly obscene ''shock troops'' are published, some in Philadelphia, some in Chicago, but most of them in Newark, New Jersey, and are issued by the same individuals under different corporate names. They go directly to the dealers by express, not by mail, so as to avoid the law.

A few years ago the Supreme Court of New York, by an unfortunate decision in the Harper & Brothers case, opened the door to carloads of obscene books and pictures. Justice Dowling, opposing the detailed autobiography of sin, voiced the minority opinion: ''The shame of America is that it has become the literary garbage dump of the world. . . . Last month 6,000 foul books and 3,000 obscene pictures in a lot were captured making their way into the port of New York. Of twenty-eight books, blacklisted by Canada, all but one are in free circulation in New York. Ninety-three other publications are also on the black list. Twenty-six are published in New York, six in Chicago, and six in Boston. Many other American cities all over the country furnish their quotas—American literature formerly was wholesome, ennobling, inspiring. We have fondly looked upon our beloved America as morally superior to European countries. It has now become the cesspool into which drains the foul sewage of degenerate foreign writings and pictures—It is an abominable crime, for its effect is to deprave the minds, and pollute the souls of innocent children and to corrupt the morals of the whole people.'' How wise a Mother has Holy Church always been to forbid such books and pictures. How foolish many of our people in breaking her laws only to commit moral suicide. The new-born stranger may be none too welcome in many homes, yet the filthy litter of the sensual press is received with open arms. There may be no room for an additional child, but there is money to lavish on every wanton issue of a diseased press.

Religion Flouted

In France, Russia and Mexico religion was held in high honor and the family virtues respected. But this was an eyesore to the prince of darkness. There appeared a number of socialistic and anti-religious papers, which, full of venomous hatred, ridiculed sacred things, sneered at time-honored customs, openly attacked the Church and her institutions and strove to subordinate her to the State. During the late Mexican persecution nothing was sacred, nothing respected, nothing revered. God was defied, religion flouted, priests and religious exiled or shot down like dogs. Churches were robbed and church property stolen and confiscated. The altars were deserted, the sacraments forsaken, churches closed and barred. Brute force, rapine and lust reigned supreme. Rob the common folk of religion and they must become like Calles and the late Obregon, mere brutes, ''civilized'' savages.

Blatant, crude anti-Catholics do not menace the faith as much as the insidious tactful writers who profess to be neutral, but are not. Lenin, who had legislated and written openly and publicly against religion, admitted his failure. During the last few years of his life he resorted to hidden and veiled attacks on religion. Beware of him who writes of progress being impeded by religion, who makes personal liberty a shield for gross crimes, who prefers outward respectability to virtue, who accuses the Church of keeping the masses in ignorance and superstition, at the same time doing his utmost to destroy or hamper Christian schools. He is the most dangerous for the gullible public. In an article, ''Religion the Base of Education,'' David Kinley of Illinois University attributes not a little of the breakdown of our moral standards, and the laxity of our lives, to the fact that literary writers, before whom an uncritical and unthinking public bow, have assumed the role of social philosophers and prophets of social progress, attempting to explain the life and purpose of society without knowing much about it and without reasoning as fairly and logically as such discussions require. Cleverness in turns of thought are mistaken for truths.

Keep in mind that the press tends to lead us all like sheep, to feed and fatten us and lull us to sleep or even shackle us, slowly but surely. How few of us are solid enough in our mental education, soul culture and moral character to put up an earnest and constant battle for the truth and the right? The average Christian exposed to all sorts of rough weather, ice, cold and rain of the secular press gradually becomes consumptive and anemic, slowly forfeiting the rosy cheeks and warm blood of faith, losing the power of developing antitoxins to the diseases of heresy and sin. The cracked vase cannot withstand the crumbling touch of time. Constant dripping wears away the largest and hardest stones. Perpetual waves wash out trees by the roots. So too the modicum of religion in the human heart is washed out, roots and all, by the tidal power of anti-religious insinuation and innuendo. With the light of faith in our hearts we can find our way, no matter how rough and difficult. But let the cold winds of the secular press beat against the frail candle of faith, it must become dimmer and weaker, until, flickering and inconstant, it goes out.

The non-religious paper gives its readers frequently and persistently the wrong perspective, placing foremost what belongs in the background, making much of things that have little or no importance, taking no notice of the great facts and portentous causes that constitute the history of the Church. The reader who is not aware of such disorders and injustice soon forms the habit of assimilating the views of his paper. His mind becomes warped: he discounts what is great and worthy of respect, rushes after shadows, trifles, mirages. He has lost his compass.

Because of the complacent attitude and the untoward spirit of the paper he reads, the Christian unconsciously slips into self-complacency on the one hand; and on the other, aversion to religious teaching and guidance. His spiritual life is gradually atrophied. He tolerates, concedes, compromises, capitulates. Whole families and parishes are thus devastated, because they have lost horror for heresy and acquired a false pride in swimming with the popular currents.

The holy name of God is ignored, His power in the universe minimized, His place in conversation and in human conduct belittled by negation. Supernatural truths are never or seldom mentioned, the divine mission of Christ and the Church is lost sight of or even denied. At times the good influence of the clergy is counteracted by the portrayal of the easy-going, the liberal or even scandalous type. The periodicals that carry such news items are playing into the hands of atheistic propaganda which makes it an objective to investigate and publish all unsavory things about the preachers (and priests) with the sole purpose of bringing the Church and religion into disrepute.

Sin, crime, vice, pruriency are played up in "news." Criminals are heroes. Murderers, thieves, swindlers, adulterers, divorcees are written up in glowing pictures. Their deeds of shame and ignobility are served in copious portions to avid consumers. All this despite the fact that the minds, especially of our youth, are like wax in receiving impressions, but like marble in retaining them. Tales of heroism, unselfish devotion to truth and duty, especially those of a religious nature, are suppressed or given in a few unimaginative lines. Hence people inclined to good are not encouraged, and youth inclined to sin are not deterred. Fallen man is only too apt to feel the urge, even if not intended by the writer: Go thou and do in like manner.

How few secular papers convey a true notion about sin? For many editors, there is no sin. There are mistakes, indiscretions, unfortunate happenings, crimes, colossal life-failures, but no sin. Repentance is scarcely spoken of. Sorrow for sin is seldom even hinted at. Self-denial, purity, sincerity, obedience, kindness, how rarely do secular newspapers consistently foster things like these? Success, prosperity, expansion, are the modern shibboleths, but where is room even in 50-page supplements for spiritual achievement, moral prosperity, soul expansion? Is there any wonder that solid religious convictions vanish, that religious ideals are neglected!

Visualize the fact that seventy million Americans are daily influenced by irreligious or indifferent periodicals. The secular press therefore can rightly be chalked down as a great contributing factor to the growth in lawlessness, insubordination to authority on the one hand, and on the other, to the great number of unchurched Americans, the vast army of indifferent Christians?

Boycott such papers until their purse strings prick their conscience and religion finds the keyhole of their press policies. Make them feel that the press is a gift of God given to supplement, not supplant, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was never intended as a soporific but a stimulus of religious thought and an urge to virtue and right living. As an antidote, subscribe to and help support the religious press, which stimulates thought on the things of God and conduct according to God's basic laws. Herein we see depicted faith embodied in deeds of everlasting import. The Catholic press keeps us in touch with the great mission activity of the modern apostles, the chivalrous heroes who dedicate their lives to carry on the work of Christ. The author is of the opinion that every home should have at least one monthly, one weekly, and one daily religious paper. There are numerous excellent monthlies and weeklies, but so far only one Catholic Daily in English, the *Daily American Tribune* of Dubuque, Iowa, which deserves the brain support of able contributors, the financial support of subscribers and advertisers, the cooperative support of news agencies, the moral support of our leaders. Twenty million Catholics and only one poorly supported Catholic Daily!

A certain diocesan statute sums up the Catholic press question: "A mighty struggle of ideas is going on in the world. Men try to shatter the Foundations of Christian morality. New heresies arise. Sects are multiplying. The principles of Christianity are excluded from social, economic and political life. Many Catholics fall away from the faith and the Church, because they read only papers that are inimical to the faith or colorless. In this mental conflict the Catholic press is the most effective pulpit for the defense of Catholic faith, to ward off the attacks of the opponents, and to give testimony to the truth.''

Note on Dangerous Books

There is such a wealth of sane and healthy literature that it should be unnecessary to ban evil books. Life is too short to read anything but the best.

Holy Mother Church in her age-old wisdom forbids Catholics to read any book or pamphlet or periodical that is destructive to faith, morals, peace and order in the state. Catholics are forbidden to publish, read, retain, sell, translate or in any way give to another the following classes of books, prohibited by canon law.

1. Any vernacular version of the Holy Bible without the imprimatur of a bishop and annotations from the Fathers of the Church (Can. 1391). Any edition or translation of the original and ancient Catholic versions published by non-Catholics. An exception is made for theological and bible students who are allowed to use such books, provided the text be rendered faithfully and completely, and the annotations and introductions do not impugn Catholic dogmas (Can. 1399, No. 1; Can. 1400).
2. Any book that teaches heresy or schism, or attempts to overthrow the foundations of religion. Two flagrant examples of modern literature are Wells' "Outline of History" and Van Loon's "History of the Bible."
3. Books that attack religion and good morals with set purpose. Atheistic and socialistic books are included. Some Catholics among the middle classes and the so-called elite, read socialistic literature which is tainted with revolutionary theories, with free love and above all marred by a materialistic view of history. This class includes works that tolerate the solitary vice, advocate divorce and race suicide, and ridicule the Christian virtues of self-control, moderation and fidelity.
4. Any book that expressly deals with religion, written by a non-Catholic, unless it evidently contains nothing against the Catholic faith. In this rule, the Church defends not only herself but also her children from all false and erroneous views on religion, for she alone has the divine right to teach the doctrines of Christ without error (Matt. 28. 18–20).
5. Books unapproved by ecclesiastical authorities, that narrate new apparitions, revelations, visions, prophecies, miracles or introduce new devotions, even private ones. This rule helps to put down many humbugs and superstitions and, at the same time, safeguards genuine products.

6. Books that impugn or deride any Catholic dogma, that defend errors which are condemned by the Holy See, books that detract from divine worship or try to overthrow ecclesiastical discipline or that of set purpose malign the ecclesiastical hierarchy or the clerical and religious state of life.

7. Books that teach or recommend any kind of superstition, sorcery, divination, magic, spiritism and similar things.

8. Books that justify duelling, suicide, and divorce. Likewise such books that defend Masonic sects and societies of like nature as useful, not harmful, to Church and to civil society.

9. Books that expressly deal with or teach obscene practices (Can. 1399, Nos. 2–9).

Any fair-minded adult can see the reasonableness and the necessity of forbidding irreligious and immoral "literature."

When the Church condemned as unfit for perusal the works of "Anatole France," the Boston *Pilot* wrote of the modern idol with feet of clay what might truthfully be applied in whole or in part to practically all of the condemned books and authors: "His works are not merely hostile and dangerous to morals; but they also hurl the cynic's ban upon all the efforts of mankind. With a hollow mockery of a laugh he disposes of ideals, aspirations and noble impulses. He pays no attention to the great movements which interest the mass of humanity. He recognizes no elite. He venerates no aspirations. His continual banter becomes wearisome. There is for him no holy of holies, and he laughs at everything—at joy and grief and pleasure and pain. It is a mirthless laugh, to be sure, this laugh of amused tolerance, which finds everything equally contemptible. He knows nothing of the sufferings of men which his genius might have helped to alleviate. He is utterly incapable of appreciating the worth of effort in itself, were it never crowned with success. He has no high seriousness and no ideals. The world for him is bounded by his own little philosophy. He can never say, 'Earth's crammed with Heaven and every common bush afire with God,' because wherever he goes, and whatever he sees, he brings with him his own little circle—Epicurus, the 18th century, and the inevitable Renan. And that is why he cannot hear the beat of angel's wings."

PART THREE

SUPERNATURAL VIRTUES

“We are not accustomed to detach our thoughts from worldly concerns in order to face God alone; and thus we come to judge of our inner worth entirely in relation to our fellowmen. The saints, on the other hand, form their judgment of self so entirely according to spiritual standards, that in considering the state of their souls, they leave out of the question all relations with their fellowmen and view their souls in the light of faith and holiness only. With them it is not ‘the world and myself,’ but ‘God and myself.”—RUEMMER-GARAHAN, “The Great Secret of the Saints,” p. 20.

CHAPTER X

HUMILITY

"The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things" (Ecclus. 3. 20). Humility is that virtue which fills man with a low opinion of himself, makes him bear humiliation and suffer contempt with patience, if not with joy. It consists in a true evaluation of ourselves, neither underestimating nor exaggerating our worth, our ability or our achievements.

Self-knowledge is the mirror wherein we see that all the good we have is God's gift and all the good we do, God's work. Self-conceit, vanity, hypocrisy are spawn of Beelzebub. Humility, modesty, sincerity are the children of God. Pride seeks to rob even God of His honor and glory. Humility gives God full and generous credit for everything except sin and failure. "Pride is the love of self carried even to hatred of God, humility is the love of God carried even to hatred of self." We might call humility the foundation of every virtue, but it likewise is the crown of God's honor and glory within us.

With a microscope one can see swarms of bacteria and infusoria in a drop of water. The grace of humility is a spiritual microscope revealing multitudinous faults and imperfections in ourselves; selfishness, deceit, sensuality and countless evil tendencies overrun the heart as swarms of bacteria, against which resistance and counteraction are necessary.

The telescope, highly magnified, reveals "new" solar systems so vast in size and so far distant from our earth as to stagger the mind. Light travels 186,000 miles per second, yet the time required for light to travel from these heavenly bodies to our earth is not seven or eight minutes, as in the case of our sun, but hundreds of thousands of years. The highly powered telescope of humility enables us to see God's power and holiness so clearly and uniformly, as to ignore all other sights and facts. The presence of God is brought so near and its nearness made so entrancing as to influence the whole of our lives and conform them with Him, the beginning and the end of all. The astronomer is absorbed in the study of the stars. The Christian should be absorbed in learning to admire and appreciate Him whose vastness and grandeur is revealed in the stars.

In the creations of nature and of grace, Thou, O God, showest man to himself, what he is, what he has been and what he is to come to. Behold, man is nothing before Thee and yet he knows it not.

He who knows himself cannot be proud, he who knows God and himself cannot but be humble. We ought to be proud of our relation to God but very humble concerning ourselves. He has created our souls according to His own image, He has formed our bodies after the likeness of His beloved Son, and yet all other creatures under heaven serve God more faithfully than we, every one in its own way. If we were so learned as to possess all knowledge, so clever as to understand how to play upon every string of the human heart and every chord of divine mercy; if we were the tallest and most handsome, the most wealthy, the most influential, the most renowned of all men; if by God's permission and help, we could work wonders in the natural and supernatural order, if we could banish all evil from our hearts and acquire every perfection, if we could put the demons to flight and summon the angels to our side at will: all these things would prove harmful to us, if we did not give all the credit to God, to whom belongs all virtue and power, all praise and glory.

The Saint of Assisi deemed himself so low and unworthy because he was ever conscious that all of goodness and worth came from God and belonged to Him. In fact he "found so much of divine grace and power wrought within him by God that his wonder and gratitude never ceased. So overpowered was he by the glory of God within him that the entire world sank into nothingness before it." He compared the Christian to a painting of Jesus. It is not the painting itself but Jesus whom the picture represents, who is worthy of honor. Are we more than the canvas upon which the divine Artist has painted His picture, or the wood or stone upon which He has graven the divine image?

Humility is the proof of real worth. Pride shows smallness of appreciation of others, humility a true estimate of ourselves. St. Teresa calls humility truth. He exercises the truest humility who places himself neither higher nor lower than he deserves to be. There is a false or pretended humility which desires to appear little and unseen, but in reality craves to be great and is ambitious of honor and public esteem. The truly humble soul strives to hide even its virtues as well as its faults and foibles, since both would attract attention. The humble soul is like the violet that grows beside the mossy stream. It grows low, hangs its head and hides within its own leaves. Hidden from strangers, unknown to friends, unnoticed by ourselves, virtue and true worth are seen by God. Our God is a hidden God who desires to be worshipped in secret (Isaias 45. 15; Matt. 6. 1 ff). "Blessed is the man," says St. Francis of Assisi, "who treasures up the good things which the Lord shows him and does not wish to manifest them to men *through hope of reward,* for the most High will manifest them to whomsoever He pleases. Blessed is the man who keeps the secrets of the Lord in his heart." The more we seek to keep from men the graces and favors received from heaven, the easier to avoid the snare of notoriety, which draws us from God. The more we strive to hide our virtues from men, the greater favor will they receive in God's sight. On the one hand we should not perform our good deeds for the sake of public approval and praise; on the other hand we should not avoid doing good merely because the public sees and commends us. Our Lord tells us to let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5. 16).

Like chastity, humility must be in constant practice, rarely in the mind, never on the tongue. We cannot notice it in ourselves or commend it in others, without tarnishing its lustre. Eulogy plucks its tender leaves, flattery crushes its stem, self-complacency destroys it: root, branch and flower. Aesop illustrates this truth in his fable on the Hart and the Hunter.

The hart while drinking from a pool became proud of his large and beautiful antlers. His thin legs, he thought, were not worthy to bear such a noble crown. Suddenly an arrow whistled by. Away bounded the nimble legs. Out of the hunter's sight, the hart became careless. He unfortunately strolled into a thicket, where the low branches and underbrush caught his horns. Meanwhile the hunter had time to come up. "Alas!" cried the hart, "we often despise what is most useful to us." Humble feet are better than a proud head. A humble man is modest and reserved about his accomplishments. He neither boasts of nor depreciates himself. Boasting is considered a crude form of vanity, self-depreciation a veneered conceit. In blaming ourselves we often run amuck into the morass of insincerity and false humility.

INTERIOR HUMILITY

"Pride is never so disgusting as when it puts on the garb of humility." To be genuine, humility must be sincere and solid. Few persons possess this rare virtue. Few are chosen because few have acquired interior humility. Many imagine they are humble, whereas they merely appear so to themselves. The bubble of deception bursts at the first pin-prick of adversity. True humility implies more than a low opinion of oneself. It bears up under adverse criticism, often harsh and unjust. It loves to be humbled. It seeks and even desires humiliation from others. It bears with others. The "Imitation of Christ" counsels: "Love to be unknown and accounted as nothing."

The divine Master excoriated the Pharisees: Woe to you—because you make clean the outside of the cup—but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness.—Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness. So you also outwardly indeed appear to men just: but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. 23. 25–28).

Sincere humility thinks and acts on the principle that man left to himself is miserable and poor and unworthy. Without God's grace we are unable of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves but our sufficiency is from God (2 Cor. 3. 5). The humble man labors on in his own quiet, unobtrusive way, silent about himself, minding his own business. His actions are unassuming, his bearing quiet and reserved, his speech simple and direct. His simplicity of soul, his candor, his unoffending manner, his modesty shine forth, pleasing to all, as the gentle beams that emerge from the rising sun.

Interior humility may be divided into four degrees. The first bears in mind our *dependence upon God* and the futility of our unaided efforts. We are nothing in the sight of God but creatures, weak, sinful, worthy of God's wrath and punishment. Whatever we are and have belongs to Him. To His fatherly care and assisting grace we owe all that is excellent in our character, all that is successful in our endeavors, all that is good in the world.

The second degree consists of *indifference to the praise* of men. Its principle is: Whom God commendeth is worthy of praise. Unfortunately human nature craves esteem. We desire men to extol our talents, our achievements, our knowledge, our virtue. With God's grace we must conquer this desire. Whenever lauded we must, in our minds, at least, turn all the credit to God. ''Not to us, but to Thy name give glory.''

The third degree willingly *accepts humiliations* as coming from the hand of God, to be borne cheerfully and with resignation. Self-love recoils from them and, if necessity compels their endurance, tolerates them only with great pain and with a discordant cry of impatience and resentment. But the humble mind and heart, seeing they come from God for a lofty purpose, accepts them peacefully and resignedly. Like the apostles, we too must rejoice when we are ''accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus'' (Acts 5. 41). Those who are not offended or irritated at the contempt of others, but bear it patiently, possess the third degree of humility. St. Paul practiced this degree, permitting himself to be made the ''refuse of this world, the offscouring of all'' (1 Cor. 4. 13). He pleased himself in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ. He gloried in his weakness and lowliness that the power of Christ might dwell in him (2 Cor. 12. 9–10).

The fourth degree not only accepts with patience and joy the contempt of others but even *desires and seeks contempt.* The great saints vied with one another in their zeal to become fools of God. Vincent de Paul, Alphonsus, Philip Neri, Vianney and countless other saints attained this highest peak of humility. St. Francis of Assisi, says Felder, suffered grievously in mind when others praised him and extolled his virtue. In the midst of popular acclamation he would be heard sighing and groaning for utter sadness. While the impassioned enthusiasm of the crowds surged round him, he would turn to someone and beg him to shower insults and reproaches upon him, or command a brother to revile him.

CHAPTER XI

MOTIVES OF HUMILITY

Nothing is more becoming to man than humility, if we consider his dependent existence, his intellectual and moral limitations, his infidelity to God by sin, his noble calling as a follower of Christ.

As creatures of God what have we that is entirely our own? What reason to boast? Why is dust and ashes proud? (Ecclus. 10. 9). A few years ago we did not so much as exist. By a free act of His power, God created our soul out of nothing and united it to our body, as yet unformed and undeveloped. We are His handiwork. A piece of art once designed and finished, continues to exist without its creator, until it is dissolved by time and the elements. Man, however, the greatest masterpiece of art, depends for his very maintenance continuously on the Creator's preserving power.

The royal Psalmist exclaims in the presence of God: "My substance is as nothing before Thee (Ps. 38. 6). If Thou turnest away thy face, they shall be troubled: Thou shalt take away their breath, and they shall fail, and shall return to their dust" (Ps. 103. 29). Father Ruemmer writes: "Man, by himself, without God, and compared with God, is simply nothing. Only when he is convinced of his nothingness and recognizes himself as dust and ashes before God, will God recognize him as His creature. The Creator will condescend to him by His grace, not only enlightening his understanding, but also drawing near to his heart and filling it with joy and consolation at the thought that he is nothing before the Divine Majesty. This will become yet clearer to him through the supernatural light of grace, and then every little thought of his own personal worth that arises in his mind must perish in the unfathomable abyss of nothingness. With such a light from Heaven, man clearly perceives himself to be in a much lower state than he ever before realized" ("The Great Secret of The Saints," pp. 13–14).

Our very existence is a loan from God. In relation to God, no man is an owner, but merely a steward. God is our Master. To some of us He has *loaned for use* five talents, to others three, and to still others only one talent. Returning on the last day, He will demand back with interest all we have made of this loan (cf. Matt. 25. 14 ff). St. Augustine, speaking of humility, calls it the whole science of man to know that of himself he is nothing and that whatever is from God is on account of God.

Furthermore, our insecure lease on life, our subjection to the elements of inanimate nature such as cold and heat, rain and snow, storm and earthquake, our struggle for the material necessities and comforts of life—all urge us to be humble. Aesop's little fable on the Tree and the Reed demonstrates this truth.

"Well, little one," said a Tree to a Reed growing at its foot, "why do you not plant your feet deeply into the ground and raise your head boldly in the air as I do?" "I am contented with my lot," said the reed. "I may not be so grand, but I think I am safer." "Safe!" sneered the tree. "Who shall pluck me up by the roots, or bow my head to the ground?" The boasting tree soon had reason to fear and to repent. A hurricane arose and tore it up and cast it down into useless shreds. The little reed, bent down by the wind stood upright again, after the storm had passed.

Humility and obscurity often bring safety. Is there an animal so helpless in physical dangers and struggles as man, especially during infancy and old age? From the cradle to the grave we all must pass under the cloud, all must go through the sea. Blessed are we if humility acts as our safe conduct and guide. "Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode; and we labor, working with our own hands; we are reviled and we bless; we are persecuted, and we suffer it. We are blasphemed, and we entreat; we are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all even until now" (1 Cor. 4. 11–13).

The limitations of our mind also counsel humility. The accumulated wisdom of the ages is but a drop in the ocean compared with God. How then can the individual feel proud of his intellectual attainments? In the realm of the natural sciences, even a Newton considered himself a child playing on the sea shore, while the great ocean of truths lay unexplored before him. All too many exponents of modern science revel in theory and guess-work. The human intellect, having groped its way since the beginning of time, is still shrouded in mystery and uncertainty. The few rays of light that have come down the ages are still surrounded by deep shadows. In 1896, Lord Kelvin characterized his 55 years of strenuous scientific work as failure: "I know no more of the electric and magnetic forces, of their relation to electricity and ponderable matter, or of chemical affinity than I knew in my first session as professor." (See "Rebuilding a Lost Faith," pp. 38 ff.)

As far as the knowledge of God and of the soul are concerned, what universal ignorance, doubt and error prevail! Despite the illuminating revelations of Jesus Christ, despite the inspired word of God, the Church's oral teaching and the vast amount of sacred literature, how little do we appreciate our relation to God; how little do we realize the superiority of the soul in comparison with the body; how little we understand the transcendence of grace over nature, of mind over matter, of character over sentiment, of principle over mere expedience! The attainments of the mind, both in natural and supernatural science, give us little occasion for pride but much reason for humility.

The same is true of the free will. In itself, moral freedom is a grand gift. It enables us to choose between that which is good and that which is not good, or between good and evil, or to choose one good thing in preference to another, or one evil thing rather than another. This greatest of natural gifts, if not properly trained and exercised, turns out to be a toy, a plaything of evil forces, a prey to evil inclinations. "Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. But sin, when it is completed, begetteth death" (Jas. 1. 14, 15). Frequently our will is like a reed shaken by the storm, like a flower bending low at a mere gust of wind. Are we not much weaker than we are able to comprehend? ("Imitation," Bk. 3, Ch. 4). Our soul must grapple with the world, the flesh and the devil; and at times we succumb. The law of sin opposes the law of grace, the law of the flesh is loath to yield to the law of the spirit. We are under the evil influence of heredity and environment, and often find ourselves the slaves and victims of vile creatures. Were it not for the divine strength of the sacraments and prayer, our weak wills would yield more frequently. The least temptation would overwhelm and conquer us. Surely another lesson in humility.

We are not only potential but also actual sinners. The Psalmist calls every man a liar, that is, more or less untrue to God's law (Ps. 115. 11). We come into this world with the birth-mark of sin. We are secure from its ravages only when our bodies lie moldering in the grave. ''Behold I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother conceive me'' (Ps. 50. 7). ''Shall man be justified in comparison with God? Behold they that serve Him are not steadfast, and in His angels He found wickedness: How much more shall they that dwell in houses of clay, who have an earthly foundation, be consumed as with the moth? From morning till evening they shall be cut down: and because no one understandeth, they shall perish forever.'' So spoke the angelic spirit in the hearing of Eliphaz (Job 4. 17–20; see also Job 25. 4–6). ''Man born of woman, living for a short time is filled with many miseries,'' the chief of which is sin (Job 14. 1).

Have we not often used our mind and will, our imagination and senses, to gratify our sinful desires? Can we enumerate all the sins of neglected duty, of irreverence toward God and sacred things, indifference and sloth in the practice of our religion, inordinate self-indulgence, sensuality, pride, vanity, oversensitiveness, impatience, anger, hatred and envy, slander and the spirit of revenge?

St. Francis of Assisi says: ''The sinner can fast, pray, weep, chastise his flesh; but one thing he cannot do (by his own power): remain true to his Lord. Let us glory in this that we give God the honor, if loyal in His service, we ascribe to Him all things which He grants us. The greatest enemy of man is his flesh. It knows not how to recall anything by which it can be moved to sorrow; it knows not how to foresee anything in order to walk in fear. It knows but one thing: to abuse the present moment. But far worse is this, that it arrogates to itself the gifts which have been granted to the soul and uses them for its own praise. It demands praise for virtue and grace, applause for watching and praying. It leaves nothing to the soul; it demands its tribute even from tears'' (Felder-Bittle, ''Ideals of St. Francis,'' p. 168).

Listen to St. Thomas à Kempis: ''As long as we carry about this frail body, we cannot be free from sin, nor live without weariness and sorrow. Fain would we be at rest from all misery; but since we have lost innocence through sin, we have lost also true blessedness. We must therefore have patience, and wait God's mercy, till iniquity pass away, and this mortality be swallowed up in life. Oh how great is human frailty, which is ever prone to vice! Today thou confessest thy sins, and tomorrow thou again committest what thou didst confess. Now thou purposest to be on thy guard, and an hour after thou art acting as if thou hadst made no resolution. Justly then may we be humbled and never think anything great of ourselves, since we are so frail and unstable. And even what we have last just acquired through grace, and with great labor, may soon be lost through negligence'' (''Imitation,'' Bk. 1, Ch. 22, Nos. 5, 6). ''If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself'' (Gal. 6. 3). The man that boasts of his virtue is like Aesop's frog that tried to blow himself up as big as the farmer's ox, only to burst. As sinners we ought to despise our weakness and strive for humility. If we are displeased at what we are, there is hope of becoming better. Humility is the bridge between sin and virtue. Implanted by faith in the garden of the soul, humility, as Moore declares, is the low sweet root from which all heavenly virtues shoot (''Loves of the Angels,'' 3. 11).

As disciples of Christ, how can we be proud? Christ insists that we learn of Him because He is meek and humble of heart. One day Jesus rebuked the mother of James and John for her inordinate ambition to see her two sons on the right and left of Jesus in His Kingdom: ''Whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister; and he that shall be the first among you, shall be your servant. Even as the Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a redemption for many'' (Matt. 20. 26–28). On a similar occasion when the disciples were disputing among themselves who should be the greatest, Jesus called the twelve and said to them: "If any man desire to be first, he shall be the last of all and the minister of all. And taking a child he set him in the midst of them" (Mark 9. 34).

Christ inculcated humility also by example. The Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Real Presence perpetuated in the Holy Sacrifice and Sacrament, are the sublimest mysteries of humility. St. Paul writes of Him: "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. 2. 6, 7). The same stupendous humiliation of himself and condescension to man He practiced in all the circumstances of His private and public life. Born in a stable on a manger of straw. He lived hidden and unknown, his two outstanding virtues were humility and obedience. "He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them" (Luke 2. 51). Thirty years He spent in humble submission to Joseph and Mary.

During the three crowded years of His public life, He was meek and kind to all, playing the role of humble servant and minister, even washing the apostles' feet. Christ chose the practically unknown province of Galilee as His particular field. He desired to die in Jerusalem. He gave over to His apostles the cultured cities of Alexandria, Antioch, Athens and Rome. His preaching was apparently without success. He merely sowed the seed, content that His apostles should reap the harvest.

Who can fully understand the deep humiliations He suffered when He was embraced with a traitor's kiss, seized by the rabble, mocked and spit upon, questioned and accused like a criminal before Pilate and Herod, when He sweat blood in the Garden? Who can depict the profound humiliation and shame He underwent during the scourging and crowning with thorns, during the journey to Calvary, during the three hours on the Cross between two thieves? The entire life of Christ is indeed the school of humility. (See Chapter XXVI, "The Mysteries of Redemption.")

In the Holy Eucharist Christ continues to humble Himself. The lowly appearance of bread and wine hide every vestige of divine splendor. He has divested Himself not only of the majesty of the Godhead and the charm of His manner which attracted the listening multitudes, but even of all human form. He remains silent and hidden in all things save love, which mysteriously flows from the tabernacle. The very flowers on the altar, so attractive by their fragrance, assert themselves more than does the hidden King of Glory. What a compelling admonition for us who crave recognition and honor, henceforth to learn of Jesus Who is meek and humble of heart. Is not Jesus the greatest teacher and model of humility? We cannot be His disciples, unless we heed His teaching and follow His example.

CHAPTER XII

ADVANTAGES OF HUMILITY

God loves, aids and rewards the meek and lowly. Since humility is the truthful acknowledgment of our unworthiness in God's sight, it must please Him and gain His love. "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace. Be ye humbled therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in the time of visitation" (1 Pet. 5. 5–6). St. Bernard says: "He who is vile in his own eyes is dear to God—I know not how it is that the Divinity is accustomed to approach humility in a more familiar way."

Our Lord shows his loathing for pride, his fondness for humility: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: Otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost (givest) alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee. And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret.—And when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast—But thou when thou fastest anoint thy head and wash thy face: That thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee" (Matt. 6).

The parable of the Pharisee and the publican likewise breathes God's hatred of self-conceit, His touching love for self-abasement. The Pharisee is a type of the self-righteous, the publican represents the humble and contrite sinner. The Pharisee, missing no opportunity to be seen by the other worshippers, struts to the very sanctuary. He divides mankind into two classes, himself and the rest of men, and thanks God that he is better than the rest. In his eyes the rest of men are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, and despicable publicans. He is not merely unlike these, but he goes the law one better. The law demands a yearly fast; he fasts every Monday and Thursday. He even gives the tenth part of all he has to religion and charity. It is hard for the average man to imagine the self-complacency of the typical Pharisee. Maas mentions the case of one Rabbi Simeon, the son of Jochar, who said: "If there were only thirty righteous persons in the world, I and my son make two of them; if there were only twenty or even only five, I and my son would be of the five; and if there were but two, I and my son would be those two; and if there were only one, myself should be that one" (Maas, "Life of Christ," no. 121, p. 354). How different is not the disposition and attitude of the poor but repentant publican. He deemed himself unworthy to approach the sanctuary, unworthy to lift his eyes towards heaven. He craved God's mercy and pardon. All else of earth and honor and position were not even thought of, much less desired. No wonder Jesus says, "This man went down into his house justified rather than the other: because everyone that exalteth himself, shall be humbled: and he that humbled himself, shall be exalted" (Luke 18. 9–14). God indeed hates self-conceit in proportion as He is pleased with humility.

God not only loves but also aids the humble. "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble He giveth grace" (1 Pet. 5. 5). "My son, do thy works in meekness and thou shalt be beloved above the glory of men. The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all things, and thou shalt find grace before God" (Ecclus. 3. 19–22). As the force of physical attraction increases in proportion as the distance diminishes, so also the spiritual attraction to God and divine grace increases as self diminishes.

The reason is clear. Everything exists for God's honor and glory; but the proud man would, if possible, rob God of His honor. He arrogates to himself the glory and credit which belongs to God alone. Some men in their diabolic pride have gone so far as to arrogate divine worship unto themselves. On the other hand, the truly humble glorify God in everything, giving Him all the credit and honor. The more the soul strips itself of the rags of self-love and vainglory, the worthier it becomes of the white robe of divine love and grace. The less ambitiously our fingers itch for position, wealth and influence, the sooner will God favor us with the ring of the spiritual nuptials. The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds and reach the heart of God. ''The humble man God protecteth and delivereth; the humble He loveth and consoleth; to the humble He inclineth himself; on the humble He bestoweth bountiful grace, and after he has been brought low, raiseth him up unto glory. To the humble He revealeth His secrets and sweetly inviteth and draweth him, unto Himself'' (''Imitation,'' Bk. II, Ch. 2). St. Francis of Assisi was convinced that God had chosen to favor him so singularly, because he was the least worthy, so that all honor and glory would redound to the Master alone.

Pride brings our virtues to ruin, but humility makes even our faults serve unto sanctification, because of the salutary confusion with which it fills us. Pride disrobes us of all virtue. In the 28th Chapter of Ezechiel we read how the prophet was ordered to make a lamentation on the proud king of Tyre: ''Thus saith the Lord God: Thou wast the seal of resemblance (to God), full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty—Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation, until iniquity was found in thee—and thy *heart was lifted up* with thy beauty; thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty, I have cast thee to the ground: I have set thee before the face of kings that they might behold thee.''

In bold contrast to the proud King of Tyre is the humble David. Ridiculed by Saul's daughter for doffing the royal robes and dancing and playing in the priestly garb, he answered the taunts of Michol: ''Before the Lord, who chose me rather than thy father and than all his house, and commanded me to be ruler over the people of the Lord in Israel, I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done; and *I will be little in my own* *eyes:* and with the handmaids of whom thou speakest, I shall appear more glorious'' (2 Kings 6. 22).

God not only loves and aids but also exalts the humble. St. Paul, speaking of Jesus, says that because He humbled Himself unto the death of the Cross, He was exalted and given a name above every name in heaven and on earth; and in consequence *even as man* receives the homage of all creatures in heaven, on earth and under the earth (Philipp. 2. 8–9).

The Blessed Virgin Mary, according to Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition was exalted above all the angels and saints of God, because of her humility. She herself testifies to this fact in the Magnificat: ''He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid'' (Luke 1. 48).

One day the apostles, filled with ambition to obtain the highest place in heaven, asked the Master: ''Who, thinkest thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?'' Jesus, calling a little child, set him in the midst of them and said: ''Amen, I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven'' (Matt. 18. 1–4).

The popular Soeur Therese of the Child Jesus, by her childlike humility, made herself worthy of the greatest exaltation. St. Augustine says: ''Brethren, behold a great miracle: God is exalted; you exalt yourself and He departs from you; you humble yourself, and He comes down to you.''

Humility exalts man. ''Humility goeth before glory'' (Prov. 15. 33). He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble (Luke 1. 52). ''God hath overturned the thrones of proud princes and hath set up the meek in their stead.—God hath abolished the memory of the proud, and hath preserved the memory of them that are humble in mind.'' ''The wisdom of the humble shall exalt his head and shall make him sit in the midst of great men'' (Ecclus. 10. 17; 11. 1). ''He raiseth up the needy from the dust, and lifteth up the poor from the dunghill; that he may sit with the princes, and hold the throne of glory'' (1 Kings 2. 8). God says through the prophet: ''To whom shall I have respect but to him that is poor and little and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my words?'' (Is. 66. 2). ''You wish to be great,'' says St. Augustine, ''begin by being very little: you are thinking of erecting a large and lofty building, think first of the foundation of humility; and the weightier and more massive the building one wishes to erect, the more deeply does one dig the foundation.'' The humble man builds on a rock, the proud man builds on sand. The one will stand, the other must fall.

Humility is the higher wisdom. It is the mother of that wisdom which directs our thoughts, words and actions to our final goal. St. Thomas of Villanova terms the science of right living the highest wisdom, even though one should know nothing else. Wisdom is more than mere knowledge or learning. It is spiritual discernment, heavenly enlightenment, divine insight into man's relations to God. Founded on divine faith, it prospers on self-knowledge and humility.

''Where pride is, there also shall be reproach; but where humility is, there also is wisdom'' (Prov. 11. 2). Solomon ascending his father's throne prayed for a docile and pious heart and the power to rule his people in wisdom: ''I am but a child and know not how to go out and come in.—Give therefore to thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people, and to discern between good and evil.'' God was pleased and gave him not only the wisdom to discern and to rule but also immense riches and glory and an extended kingdom (3 Kings 3. 7–13). Solomon ruled in wisdom as long as he remained humble and faithful to God. Only when he forgot God and became absorbed in creatures did he fall from wisdom and glory, to become a warning for all.

The self-conceited wisdom of the world revels in pride and sensuality, unable to understand the counsels of God or to win His favor and His grace. Job exclaims: ''Man knoweth not the price of wisdom, neither is it found in the land of them that live in delights—behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding (Job 28. 13, 28). Humility convinced of its unworthiness in God's sight, prays to be delivered from the trappings of pride and the toils of sensuality. Humility weighs in the balance of truth the misery of human nature and the majesty of God. Entering the deep consciousness of its own nothingness, it daily grows in the conviction that all earthly things are relative and inadequate, compared with the absolute and perfect God. The humble man adopts God's unchanging standard of truth and right, and lives in the light of eternity. His dependence upon God is the source of his happiness and in his soul wells up an unquenchable desire for divine light and strength. His life becomes a sacred song, whose refrain is none other than the Psalmist's prayer: ''O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me.''

God's grace is the best teacher and surest guide of the soul, says Ruemmer, whilst the humble heart is the most docile and receptive for enlightenment. The ''Imitation of Christ'' pictures the divine Spouse whispering to the humble soul: ''I am He that in an instant elevates the humble mind to comprehend more of the eternal truth than could be acquired by ten years of study in the schools. I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honor, without contention of arguments—I am He who teaches to despise earthly things, to loathe things present, to seek and to relish the things eternal, to fly honors, to endure scandals, to repose all hope in Me, to desire nothing out of Me, and above all things ardently to love Me—To some I speak things common, to others things more particular, to some I sweetly appear in signs and figures, to others in great light I reveal mysteries. The voice of books is one and the same, but it teacheth not all men alike, because I within am the Teacher of Truth, the Searcher of the heart, the Understander of thoughts, the Mover of actions, distributing to everyone as I judge fitting'' (''Imitation,'' Bk. III, Ch. 43).

Only true humility can endure the taunts of a wicked world and keep up the spirit of faith and sacrifice amid all the trials and hardships of life. Only true humility can bury its worldly talents and sell all that it has, in order to follow Christ. Only true humility can love and seek the higher life of the soul, in order to be hid with Christ in God.

Helping man to forget himself and his troubles, humility gives peace and contentment, in spite of many annoyances and grievances, disappointments and failures. The soul that is always busied about itself, that will not ignore or cannot forget self, finds little pleasure in life. A small injury, a little sign of contempt, a momentary failure or set-back grieves and wounds it for a considerable time. Such a heart is a fruitful field for worry and anxiety, impatience and anger over the smallest provocations. Obscurity, for many such, is a heavy weight, the longing for honors and preferments keeps gnawing the hungry heart. Failure or even the fear of failure draws in its train a restless, nervous dread of humiliation; or perhaps envy over a rival's success, like a secret cancer, eats away the last consolations of peace.

Social Advantages

Wherever humility reigns, there is peace, tranquillity and serenity; the sunshine and happiness of an unclouded social atmosphere; the fragrant flowers of charity and mutual helpfulness, of social justice and fairness to all. If charity always accompanies and good will follows humility, we ought to cherish lowliness as a great social blessing. The "Imitation of Christ" says: "When a man humbleth himself for his faults, then he readily pacifieth others and easily satisfieth those who are angry with him.—The humble man in the midst of reproaches, remaineth in great peace, for his dependence is on God, and not on the world.—Always seek the lowest place, and to be subject to every one.—Behold, such a one enters into peace and rest" ("Imitation," Bk. II, Ch. 2, no. 2; Bk. III, Ch. 23, no. 3).

Humility not only pleases God, but likewise gains the favor of men. Experience proves its desirability as a social virtue. The humble and lowly-minded are far more congenial and companionable associates than the conceited. Nothing so bores and exasperates us as the pretensions of the self-centered. The conceited man is too conscious of his own excellence and, in preferring himself to others, he makes them feel their inferiority. They may have more talent and virtue and solid achievement to their credit than he has, but somehow or other he makes them feel their mistakes and deficiencies most keenly. In his ambition he seeks the highest place, in the very face of worthier and more capable men; he often works in an underhand and crooked way against his rivals and competitors, thereby making himself worthy of the opprobrium of all right-minded men. If he succeeds in wedging himself into an undeserved place of honor and preferment, he cannot gain the good will and praise of honest citizens.

On the other hand the humble, self-forgetting, unpretentious, unambitious man thinks less of himself, his accomplishments and prospective preferments. He puts heart and soul into his work, thereby achieving success and meriting the good will of the community. Undesirous of promotion, he is often elected to a place of dignity and honor which he graces by achievement. He has little reason to work underhand and dishonestly, because he knows people see through crafty and dishonorable devices. He prefers the love and good will of his associates and friends to the wealth and the high life of the ambitious. The humble man has learned to overcome sensitiveness and acquired the art of forgiving injuries. Unlike the haughty and vindictive man, he eschews his rights and prerogatives, and is ready to compose differences in opinion or taste.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRACTICE OF HUMILITY

Many short-sighted Christians, viewing life through the distorting prism of the senses and passions, refuse to accept the Christian doctrine of humility, in spite of the tradition of nineteen centuries in its favor. Even the best of us balk at the practice of humility. Dr. Walsh says: ''We need more training in the doing of hard things—Bringing up children without discipline leaves victims of hysteria.'' The modern spontaneous method of teaching is failing to educate us up to the Christian standard of mortification and humiliation. We must be able to deny and humble ourselves without undue chafing. Like steel we must be tempered in the fire of humiliation. The modern cult of naturalism cannot do away with the supernaturalism of humiliation. The ''new morality'' cannot and will not supersede the old morality of bearing humiliations according to the teaching and practice of Jesus. What is it that holds the first place in the doctrine and life of Christ? St. Augustine answers: ''Humility holds the first place. What holds the second? Humility. What holds the third? Humility.'' The self-worshipping modern world needs another St. Francis to impress upon its mind and heart the gospel of humility. He would rather not possess virtue and worth than to misuse it for self-glorification. He and his companions and followers aimed constantly to occupy the lowest place and to be subject to every creature for God's sake. Considerate to all, he accommodated himself to all, even the lowest. ''Among the saints,'' says Celano, ''he was the greatest saint, among sinners he was one of them. He met the prelates and priests with the greatest reverence, the aged with deep despect, the nobles and wealthy with esteem, the poor with the heartiest love and compassion, all men with perfect submission.'' His deep reverence and respect for the least and the greatest of God's creatures might be called the crowning point of his passionate love for lowliness. It was comparatively easy for Francis to be submissive and respectful to all, because he looked upon himself as the least worthy of God's creatures.

The same God-man who insisted that to be His disciples we must take up our cross and follow Him serenely and cheerfully, also commands us to become like little children. "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. 18. 3). In these words Christ held up the unpretentious child as our model. The child, unspoiled by its parents or surroundings, forgets all about itself, it is free from the anxieties of self-love, it is spontaneously conscious, as it were, of its helplessness and inferiority. Outwardly and inwardly we must try to approximate this ideal set for us by the Master.

Progress in Humility

The more apparent our efforts in upward striving, the less progress we make; the more we hide our efforts, the greater is our real progress within. When examining our conscience we dare not be contented with finding only our apparent faults; the hidden ones likewise must be searched. To discover the more subtle failings of nature we must examine our fundamental relation to God, not merely our external relations with men. Only by comparing ourselves, as did the saints, with God can we become conscious of the appalling distance between His greatness and our nothingness. "The relation that exists between God and ourselves," says Bishop Egger, "is a paramount influence in all our deeds. According as we surrender ourselves to God or not, our interior and exterior lives assume a holy or a worldly character." "When the rays of the sun," says St. Bonaventure, "penetrate a room we perceive thousands of particles of dust, invisible before; in the same way the soul, enlightened by divine grace, becomes conscious of the least imperfections, of a thousand faults in those things which seem perfect to such as are not enlightened by the light of grace" (cf. Ruemmer-Garahan, "The Great Secret of the Saints," Ch. 1).

Our humility towards God is tested by our conduct toward our fellowmen The first test is *obedience.* If we do not cheerfully and promptly obey our superiors, who take God's place, how can we say that we are submissive to God himself. If we obey without murmuring or questioning, we are truly humble. Obedience implies submission. A humble man counts himself as inferior and subject to everyone for the love of Jesus Christ. He esteems all men as his superiors. (See Le Camus, ''Spirit of St. Francis de Sales,'' Chapter 6.)

A second is *aversion to flattery* and praise, and the habit of giving to God all the credit and glory. A third test is *patience* in rebuke and correction. Patience in depreciation, reproach, contempt, abjection. In this way we become conformable to Jesus Christ, the highest model of humility.

A man who can eat and digest rough, coarse food has a healthy system. Even so in the spiritual life, one who assimilates rebuke and correction, howsoever repellent, enjoys spiritual health. The bitter medicine prescribed by the physician is more salutary than sugar-coated pills. Even so, humiliations that we suffer at the hands of others are better than those rebukes and corrections we mildly administer to ourselves. It is not a sign of progress if we are willing to humble ourselves, but resent to be humbled by another. In the words of St. Francis de Sales, too often do we ''choose to pay the debt with our own hand and in the coin we see fit to select; we may correct and admonish ourself, but we seldom tolerate correction or reproof from others, yet it is an unquestionable fact that one ounce of humiliation and correction from another is more profitable than a hundredweight which is self-imposed. Our best actions are often marred by self-choosing and self-pleasing. Just when we fancy them to be most satisfactory, they often prove mere empty shells, like the Dead Sea fruit, which are fair without, but full of dust within.''

A fourth test is an eager desire of depreciation, reproach, contempt, abjection. The sublimest token of humility is the voluntary going forth to meet the lowest humiliations with the heroic pleasure of the saints. Moses considered it an honor to share the reproach of his people, in order to deliver them (Exodus 4. 18 ff.). Our Saviour was willing to become ''a worm and no man, the outcast of His people,'' that He might save mankind from hell.

How eager to embrace the heavy cross; how brave to carry it, in spite of failing strength; how generous to die upon it! The Blessed Virgin, the beloved disciple and the holy women followed their humiliated Master and remained faithfully at the foot of the Cross, to witness and to adore the sublimest mystery of humiliation. Later on, the apostles, encouraged and fortified by the Holy Spirit, went out to preach Christ Crucified to a proud, disdainful world. Dismissed from prison with the warning not to speak of Jesus, they went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus (Acts 5. 41). St. Paul gloried in nothing save his infirmities: Gladly will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may dwell in me. . . . For when I am weak, then am I powerful (2 Cor. 12. 9–10).

CHAPTER XIV

DYING AND YET WE LIVE

"They that are Christ's have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences" (Gal. 5. 24). "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies" (2 Cor. 4. 10).

Prayer is the beginning of all good, but only the beginning. It is necessary to join self-denial to prayer. Prayer directs our thoughts and desires toward God and is easy to one who knows God. Self-denial turns our attention to our own selves.

There are three ways of regarding self, that of the modern naturalistic school, that of the pessimistic school of reformers and the golden mean between them, the Catholic viewpoint. History relates how St. Helena found the true cross of Christ and distinguished it from the two crosses of the thieves. Upon excavating at Mt. Calvary, three crosses were found; all were borne in solemn procession to the home of a dying woman and each in turn was brought into contact with her body. When the third one touched the invalid, she was instantly restored to health. Hence it was the true cross. In like manner, to find out the true and correct idea of mortification we must dig deep into the heart of the problem. Finding various notions we must put each to the test, to discover the one with divine efficacy and power.

The first view is that man, as far as his nature and origin are concerned, is good and perfect. Deterioration is only an aftermath, due to associating with a corrupt world and its banal influences. According to this view, man need only keep away from evil external influence, bad companions and wicked associations, and character will come of itself as nature directs. This naturalistic school of thought denies the whole supernatural order. In its foolish optimism, it impugns the doctrine of original sin.

Consequently it refuses to believe the interior degradation of man's free will and the corruption of his mind, his inclination to evil and the necessity of a great struggle to accomplish the good.

A second school, that of the Protestant reformers of the 16th century, goes to the opposite extreme. Man was created good, but original sin has so ruined his nature that he is totally depraved. God himself cannot make him good again, but must overlook his wickedness and clothe him with the garment of Christ's justice, which man acquires by divine faith. Here on earth God covers up man's sins and even in heaven the evil remains. Such is the teaching of him who boasted that he reformed the Church of God in the 16th century. This school denies the free will of man and limits the power of divine grace. It is evidently false. Little wonder that Martin Luther said we are bad when the devil rides us and good when God rides us.

The third school or Catholic view steers a middle course. It teaches that God in the beginning created man good and upright; but that man, deceived by the devil under the guise of a serpent, fell into serious sin which robbed him of his supernatural gifts and made him liable to eternal loss. His free will was not totally depraved, but seriously weakened and inclined to evil. Man lost the balance of his powers, the firm and solid control of himself in the presence of evil. A hard struggle is necessary to combat temptation and to overcome sin. Man becomes victorious only by the grace of Christ and his own cooperation. Christ does not cover up the original sin which we inherit from Adam nor the actual sins that we ourselves commit, but Christ takes away sin, He blots it out. Original sin is wiped out by baptism. Actual sin is removed by the Sacrament of Penance, as well as by perfect contrition coupled with the desire to confess sacramentally. Baptism and Penance therefore restore the grace that was lost and make man holy and just. But the inclination to evil always remains. Hence the need of constant self-denial to re-establish the harmony among our powers and the mastery of mind and will over the lower powers of the body.

The Catholic doctrine of original sin, necessitating redemption and mortification is the true and right teaching. It does justice to God and to man. It humbles us as sinners, it uplifts us as children of God. It warns us against our evil inclinations, it encourages us and gives us hope through Christ. ''God is acknowledged as the author and finisher of our justification, while man has the honor and merit of cooperating with God in his salvation.'' There is no exaggeration in either direction. It is the golden mean of truth between extreme optimism and extreme pessimism. Self-denial therefore must stamp all our personal actions and our virtues.

What is self-denial? It is frequently considered a lion in ambush. But it is nothing of the kind. It is neither a blind terror nor an open torture. Its purpose is self-mastery, nothing else. It is the reasonable and moderate application of moral force and character in our daily actions. We are rational creatures, hence must act according to reason and law. Reason, conscience and faith must be our guides. These demand a certain sweet and deliberate self-control. A conflict exists between the lower and the higher desires in man. Only habitual self-denial of the lower will give mastery to the higher. It is difficult, but the difficulty arises not from the thing itself, but from the weakness of man. Our powers are weak, our nature needs support. God will not leave us in the lurch. Humble prayer will help us to mortify and control ourselves.

The direct object of self-denial is not our nature nor our powers. We need these God-given faculties and cannot live and act without them. It is not even our passions that we have to fight directly. They are part of our household furniture and are in themselves good. They become evil only by abuse and misguidance.

Not our passions but the inordinate indulgence of them is evil and therefore the object of self-denial. What is inordinate indulgence? All that is opposed to our end or tends to deprive us of achieving our purpose in life, all that exposes us to the danger of losing our souls. An old writer tells us to draw the line clearly and firmly in things that are pleasing to nature; e.g., food, drink, idleness, expenditure. The pleasant things of life should be so used as to be useful and beneficial to the soul rather than merely a source of gratification for the body. The soul and body must have team-work, they must pull together, but always under the leadership of the soul and for its benefit. All useless, unreasonable and sinful thoughts, words and actions must be put to death, that on their corpse may rise the virtues of the Christian life. Only by denying ourselves the useless, the unreasonable, the sinful indulgence of any and all the passions can we lead a holy life.

The purpose of mortification, therefore, is not to hinder and stifle, to spoil and destroy nature, but to aid it against our enemy, to guard, guide, direct, educate, improve, strengthen it, to incline it habitually to what is good and deter it from what is evil, to preserve it from repeated falls, or if it has fallen, to restore it, as far as possible, to purity, justice and holiness, to make it prompt and capable in the full use of its faculties for religious and social service.

The constraint and violence that accompany self-denial are not ends but merely means to an end. Man is born for happiness, but sin brings sorrow in its wake, until the day star of eternal gladness rises in his heart. The pain and difficulty of self-denial is lessened only by practice, by prompt, courageous and persevering practice. Little Henry had been ill; his mother had warned him against eating cake; his little sister came running with a piece of cake; Henry was hungry, the cake was tempting, ''Jeanette,'' he said, ''you must run out of the room at once and take the cake with you. I'll shut my eyes until you are gone.''

The exalted nature of mortification is seen by the important and indispensable place it holds in the upbuilding of the virtues, in the development of character. It is not of itself a virtue but a *principle of virtue,* closely allied to the cardinal virtues of fortitude and temperance. In so far as it aims at moderation it is allied to temperance, not merely in eating and drinking, but in all joys and pleasures. In as far as it requires courage and perseverance in its execution it is allied to fortitude.

St. Ignatius Loyola says that the purpose of mortification is so to train our will that no passion is allowed to direct or guide our actions. It is the highway to self-control. It is an indispensable means of acquiring any virtue and the self-defense of all the virtues.

Why mortify ourselves? Because our fallen nature is like a knotted trunk, distorted by frivolous, dangerous, unclean inclinations which dispose us more readily to evil than to good. We are full of selfishness, pride, envy, malice, cowardice, impatience, sensuality, indolence, infirmity. Our lives too oft are writ in water, or perhaps soiled by blood and greed. The most cultured man can become very mean and ignoble, if he refuses to do violence to his evil inclinations. The most brilliant and artistic men are often wicked and depraved, giving free rein to their passions. The Byrons and Shelleys and Oscar Wildes are not dead. Their passions are not yet subdued. The best of us, if we give our passions free play, can in an evil moment be led into almost unbelievable wickedness. Our passions are like wild beasts. They must be kept behind bars and bolts of steel. Even when we think our lion or tiger is tame, we cannot trust him. Man's greatest enemies are his own untamed passions. Beware of the enemy within the gate, the traitor within your own heart. The self-indulgent man trusts himself too much, unwary he is caught and overcome in an evil, unguarded moment. It is related of St. Macarius, that having received a fine bunch of grapes, but desiring to mortify his appetite, he passed them to a fellow-hermit who, in turn, did the same. Finally Macarius received them back again practically untouched. Upon learning through whose hands they had passed, he thanked God for the generous spirit of mortification he had found.

We must deny ourselves secondly, because we are men living amongst men. Life is one continued act of self-denial. Why not profit spiritually by denying ourselves for a worthy cause? Life is not a pleasure trip but a long and difficult journey of downhill slidings and uphill climbing. Life is a military service that cannot be evaded. We are all drafted men, not mere volunteers, in the militia of God. What life is more self-sacrificing than that of a soldier on duty or in the barracks? Life is a warfare of enforced marches, machine gun fire, barbed wire entanglements and shell hole defences. Surely it demands self-denial and sacrifice.

Life is companionship with many others of unlike dispositions and characters, having various likes and dislikes, divers temperaments and prejudices. We are bound to one another by a fine network of relationships, social obligations, vocations and occupations, all of which demand some kind of sacrifice. Patience with oneself, with one's neighbor and with God's Providence, are possible only to the mortified. If mortification is therefore necessary in life, why not give it a spiritual flavor? Why not deny ourselves for a motive higher than mere necessity, namely, for God's sake, for the benefit of our soul? One day St. Teresa, being very ill, thought of tasting an orange. A bag of very sweet ones was brought. St. Teresa, however, sent them to some of her poor people who were sick, saying: "I feel more pleasure in giving them to the poor than if I kept them for myself; when I see them pleased, I too am rejoiced."

Thirdly we must mortify ourselves because we are Christians. Everything in the Christian religion obliges us to self-denial. Jesus preached it in season and out of season, by word and example. He even makes it the indispensable condition of being His disciples: "He that will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me." Hence mortification is the token and symbol of our holy religion, the badge of a Christian life. To believe and do all that faith teaches demands much self-denial. Our minds and wills are made captive to the sweet yoke of the Gospel only by God's grace and by our own spirit of mortification. The ten Commandments of God and the six commandments of the Church require still more self-denial than does our faith. St. Paul compares the Christian life to the death and burial with Christ. It demands killing off all inordinate worldly and sensual desires, and the burying of the old man and all his unruly and immoderate concupiscence.

Only by the straight and narrow path, can we avoid the alluring pleasures of the world, ignore the seductive charms of vice and counteract the deceptive schemes and assaults of the devil. He that deliberately refuses to deny himself and his unlawful desires is on the broad steep road that leads to eternal destruction. Like Lucifer he declares war against God. He defies the teachings of Christianity, denies the Christian viewpoint and is false to the Christian standard. A little city girl, visiting her country cousin, observed the laborers planting the seed in the field. "Oh how foolish," she said, "to bury the beautiful seed in the earth, to let it rot and die!" The farmer smiled and said: "Yes, but if we do not bury it, we shall not have the fields of corn in Autumn.'' Our Lord applied this natural truth to the spiritual harvest in the soul: ''Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal'' (John 12. 24–25). Christ inculcates a holy hatred of self, a hatred of all that is low and mean in our nature. Luis de Granada calls this holy hatred our chief instrument in the work of salvation: ''The arm of mortification which draws its force as much from hatred of self as from love of God, enables us to treat our failings with the firmness of a skilful physician and relentlessly to cut and burn with no other thought than to rid the soul of every evil tendency.'' Only a mortified man, therefore, is a true Christian.

Fourthly, mortification helps us to acquire all the virtues and makes their exercise easy and fruitful. Many people imagine they have sufficient virtue already. In the Christian warfare there is no standstill. Unless we row upstream, the current takes us down headlong. So it is with the acquisition of new virtues. The older we get, the more we realize that our present stock of virtues is insufficient and inadequate. As yet we have not very much patience, the least thing annoys us; we have little meekness, the least difficulty angers us; as yet we have little humility, the least opposition galls us. The key to all these and other necessary virtues is mortification. If we would remain peaceful possessors of our victories and become the happy acquirers of new trophies, we must value the key thereto, the golden key to all that is good for the soul, self-denial. An uncultivated field grows weeds. An unmortified heart grows many vices. Our hearts must be constantly plowed and cultivated, so that the corn of virtue may take deep root and grow sturdy.

Self-denial helps us to merit life everlasting. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and only those who do violence to their inordinate desires can hope to attain it. Charles V of France laid his crown and scepter on one table and his sword on another. He then bade his son choose. The smiling prince chose the sword, saying, ''With this sword, I shall win the scepter and the crown.'' Our heavenly Father expects us to do the same. With the

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sword of self-denial we conquer heaven. Self-denial is the surest way of laying up treasures for heaven, because it opposes our natural feelings and cannot possibly be an illusion. It is also the most meritorious, because the most difficult and trying and hence it makes possible the exercise of the highest virtues. It is likewise most often at hand. Every hour of the day we have golden chances of offering up to Jesus the many little crosses that meet us and the thorns that prick us and make us bleed. May we in future have heaven more in mind and the little crosses of life will be borne more cheerfully and patiently and our crown be all the brighter. A life of self-denial is a foretaste of future happiness. Seneca did not hesitate to affirm that he who closes his heart to the claims of unruly desires was not inferior in wealth or happiness to Jupiter himself. Since man's misery springs from unfulfilled desires, he may be said to be very near the summit of happiness, who has learned to subdue the desires of his will, so that they cannot disturb him.

The greater violence we do to ourselves, the greater progress we shall make. This saying of Thomas à Kempis holds both for the temporal as well as for the spiritual life. St. Paul says: "Everyone that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one. I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight not as one beating the air: but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 Cor. 9. 25–27). Our progress in self-denial therefore is the keynote to advancement in virtue. It is the touchstone of our moral life. A live fish swims against the current; a dead one floats. A live Christian stems the tide of sinful desires, the dead one is carried away by the stream.

Mortification promotes stability of character. It is quite plain that the fruits of external civilization and progress are barren for the individual unless the will be trained and the character rightly formed. Without character, the most educated and refined men and women are but moral beggars and wretched slaves of passion. The Prophet's words are true of our own country: "Their land is filled with silver and gold: and there is no end

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of their treasures,—and *man* hath bowed himself down and man hath *been debased*'' (Isaias 2. 7, 9).

Character is the thing that is loved, feared and respected by all. The greatest need today is men and women of character. In many sections, where corruption and dishonesty flare up from time to time, because men have not been trained to deny their greed and inordinate ambitions, the people want men who can be trusted with other people's money, other people's lives, other people's virtue. He who can rule himself is a king, the ruler and master of his own heart. Others look up to him, as to a prince among men, they respect him, love him, consult him, follow him. Character is the only true diploma in the school of life. It is the corner stone of success. Not learning, not artistic feeling, not culture, not science, not even social service counts as much as character. ''Who learns and learns, but acts not what he knows, is one who plows and plows, but never sows.''

CHAPTER XV

METHOD IN MORTIFICATION

Since sin and temptation trail us constantly like wolves seeking prey, we need the inseparable watchdogs of vigilance and mortification. The faithful hound never forsakes its master. Self-denial, to overcome the rooted habit of sin, the firmly established power of evil in our nature and in our surroundings, must likewise be made a habit. Mere casual or occasional self-denial is little better than worthless. Our struggle for self-mastery must be a struggle on principle and its practice constant and uninterrupted. The weeds in the garden of the soul must be rooted out again and again.

Our warfare should not be merely a defensive but also an offensive one. If we wait until our enemy surprises and attacks us, we are lost. Like a prudent and far-seeing general, we must go out to reconnoiter, to find a vantage ground whence we can more speedily squash the enemy and demand terms of peace. For example if we are tempted to eat too much or pray too little, we should immediately go out to the attack by eating less, by cutting down on a dish of especial relish; we should immediately begin the habit of praying oftener and longer and more fervently. If tempted to permit the eyes to roam too freely and with evil desire we should immediately deny ourselves even lawful sights. This makes for self-mastery. Why not try it and see that it works like a charm? Moreover the enemy never sleeps. Hence we too must always be on the alert, always on the offensive against any outcropping evil propensity. St. Augustine writes: "The passions wage war, do you wage war with them; they attack, do you likewise; they assault, do you assault; attend to this that they do not conquer—What consolation for us when we shall have conquered these passions. They themselves will assist in our triumph."

We must strive to mortify and check and restrain the whole man. All the senses of the body, all the faculties of the soul, all the passions and emotions of the lower will must be kept within reasonable and lawful bounds of self-restraint on all sides, at all times and in every possible way.

Exterior Mortification

Exterior mortification is the restraint of the outward senses and the emotions of the body according to reason and the law of God. The good Christian withdraws his senses from all that caters to sensuality or that flatters mere pleasure for its own sake, and accustoms himself to reasonable and moderate delight. Many persons do not observe the regulations of the Church regarding fast and abstinence. They are like the birds who neglected the swallow's advice to eat up all the hemp seed. It grew up and was made into cord and of the cord the bird nets were made, to entrap the unwise little creatures (Aesop). Destroy the seed of evil, or it will grow up to your ruin. The devil conspires against the unmortified. A conspiracy was formed, Spirago tells us, against Archias, King of the Thebans. The conspirators arrived at the city, ready to carry out their plot, when one of the king's friends discovered them and dispatched a messenger to the king with a letter. The merry-making king said: ''Grave matters must be postponed until tomorrow.'' That night he was assassinated.

The eyes must be weaned from idle curiosity, the ears from useless gossip, the palate should not be pampered with dainties or overfed with meat and alcoholic drink. The body should be accustomed to useful and serious labor, hardship, fatigue, cold and heat, abstemiousness in food and rink, moderation in pleasure and sleep. Life is not strewn with roses all the way. At intervals are erected crosses large and small, according to our need and our capacity to bear them. Beneath the sand lie burrs and thorns.

In mortification the two most important items are moderation and variation, so as not to defeat its purpose and cause physical injury or mental dullness. Emphasis must be laid on essentials rather than on accidentals, which if overstressed lead to morbidity and religiosity.

The true spirit of mortification must predominate over what is merely external and accidental.

Advantages.—To hold the bodily senses and powers in check is to be beforehand with temptation and to nip the evil in the bud. Sin may be so close that we cannot see its Medusa-like face, yet we can feel its poisonous breath. Man, to be unscorched, must turn away from the sight and breath of sin and cling to the protecting shield of mortification. External mortification does more than merely rid the body of inordinate passion. It removes the natural repugnance to difficulty in the attainment of virtue, converts timidity and sloth into courage and energy. It gives one cheerfulness and constancy in the performance of good and brings in its wake interior joy and peace, delight in prayer and confidence in God. Moses fasted forty days and forty nights on Mt. Sinai while conversing with the Lord. "He neither ate bread nor drank water, and he wrote upon the tables the ten words of the Covenant" (Exodus 34. 28).

A royal example.—The more we resist our sinful appetites, the more submissive and docile they become and the more our will regains its proper dominion over the body. He who represses the body strengthens and elevates the spirit to heavenly things and prepares it for prayer and union with God. Some people look upon life as one mad rush for pleasure. It is related of Louis XVI, unfortunate king of France, who died on the scaffold during the French Revolution, that when a youth of twenty years, he once remarked to his courtiers: "Next year I shall have to fast." They considered it impossible for him to fast while hunting. Louis, however, replied that "no amusement, not even the royal sport of hunting, excuses from the law of fast and abstinence."

When he was made king, he abolished some abuses, among them, that of serving meat at the great hunting feasts, when they occurred on days of abstinence. A certain officer grumbled at the "new" regulation, smartly quoting Scripture for his own purpose: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man" (Matt. 15. 11). "You are right," replied the king. "It is not the meat that enters the body, but rather the disobedience that enters and injures the soul. Christ also said: 'He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican' (Matt. 18. 17). Now, I do not think you would like to be called either the one or the other."

During his last days in prison, when a cruel jailer was wont to place forbidden food in derision before him, he contented himself with dry bread ("Anecdotes Christiennes").

Interior Mortification

The laws of the Church, the example of Christ and the saints, the words and the spirit of the Gospel, point clearly to the duty of bodily mortification. But spiritual self-denial is much more important, for its object is more excellent, its obligation more binding, its practice more difficult and hence more meritorious; it is less liable to excess, its fruits are more abundant and precious.

Its object is more excellent. In exterior mortification we offer and sacrifice to God our body and its sensuous satisfaction. In interior self-denial we sacrifice not only our higher faculties, the mind and will, but even ourselves.

Exterior self-denial is but the outer shell, covering the fruit and protecting the kernel. It is the control of the intellect, of the free will, of the imagination and all the passions that constitute the very soul of mortification. All the moral and ethical value is derived from the inner life, the intelligent and free and responsible life of the soul. Hence all outward self-control derives its value from interior mortification, without which no solid virtue is possible. A sinner came to confession to Pierre de Corbeil, Archbishop of Sens. His tale of woe was continually interrupted by sighs, sobs and groans. "Will God be satisfied with anything I can do, who have offended Him so grievously? Only seven years of penance! The longest life would not suffice to atone for the heinousness of my offences—Three days fasting on bread and water! Do not humor my weakness, do not let me perish," he said, beating his breast and shedding copious tears. Seeing the man's extraordinary sorrow and desire to do commensurate penance, the bishop finally gave him one Our Father and assured him of divine forgiveness. At that moment his heart, overcome with grief and gratitude, broke. He expired in an act of perfect contrition (Power, "Catechism," Vol. 2, p. 396).

Its obligation is more binding. In case of necessity or grave difficulty, the Church excuses one from bodily mortification such as the fast, or abstinence, or at least substitutes another obligation, but she cannot dispense from the law of spiritual self-denial. God has surrendered to man the entire creation except the reasonable service of one's will. There is no substitute for this universal law which binds all ages and conditions of humanity. Caprice can never be a substitute for reason, self-indulgence cannot take the place of self-control. Repentance must replace habits of sin. God demanded sincere conversion of the inhabitants of Nineveh, to save them and their city from destruction. The king of Nineveh exchanged his royal robes for sackcloth and ashes, and proclaimed a universal fast for forty days and nights. God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way and in His mercy spared the city (Jonas, ch. 3).

It is more difficult and more meritorious. It takes much time and effort to subdue the flesh, but it takes more self-mastery to rule the movements of the mind and heart. It takes a more generous and a more continuous effort, since the interior powers are more subtle and hence can more easily elude our vigilance. It is a ceaseless and often painful restraint which quickly fatigues human nature and causes the vacillating and weak will to give up. Only the strong-willed and trained persevere.

It is less liable to excess. In mortifying the flesh, we can easily exceed the limits of moderation, zeal overcoming discretion; we can imagine we are doing wonders in virtue whilst actually we are undermining our health and unfitting ourselves for grave responsibilities. Moreover a secret vanity or love for eccentricity may be actuating us.

But we have less reason to fear such things in the practice of interior self-denial. In striving against the disorders of the mind and the will we can more easily free ourselves from selfish ends and selfish motives. Interior self-repression is more genuine, more sincere, truly a product of grace and divine inspiration. There is less danger of becoming proud of our internal victories, because even we ourselves are not fully cognizant of success or failure. God alone knows to what heights of self-devotion and self-sacrifice our denials have led. He alone sees how beautifully our efforts at self-conquest have interwoven themselves on the tapestry of divine grace. The sanctuary of our souls lies hidden and hence will not gather vain flattery.

Finally it accomplishes its end more directly and efficaciously. The main purpose of mortification is to repress the evil tendencies of nature and subdue the soul unto the captivity of Jesus Christ. Sin is the enemy of God and man. Faith tells us it is the real murderer of our Savior. Contaminating and deforming the souls of men, it renders them abominable in God's sight. In this life it robs us of grace, in the next world it deprives us of that dearly bought right to heaven, and condemns us to eternal hell. No calamity of the body can compare with the eternal loss of the soul. Mortification, to go to the root of sin, must repress and control the disordered will. Since interior self-denial accomplishes this end, its fruits are abundant and precious.

The denial of the spirit is likewise more universal in its effects than the mortification of the body. Its influence reaches every part of our nature, it guards and directs the thoughts and imaginations of the mind, it purifies and ennobles the affections of the will, elevating at the same time its aspirations and yearnings. Hence by interior self-denial our higher nature is more completely subdued to the captivity of our loving Master, so that His divine grace may take full possession of us. (See Branchereau, ''Meditations for Seminarians and Priests,'' Vol. 2.)

Objections Answered

''Self-denial is too hard.'' To one who knows the sacrifices made for earthly comforts and enjoyments, this objection seems ridiculous. Why should men and women, who make heroic sacrifices to enjoy some trifling pleasure or to attain a paltry social distinction or political preferment, balk at undergoing some hardships for the sake of salvation? During many years of training what self-restraint is practiced by the runner, the ball-player, the prize-fighter! When Miss Ederle swam the English Channel, what almost superhuman effort was required! Several times she was advised to give up, but she persevered and won. For what? For the Ford car promised by her father. For the honor, the heroism, the renown that was in it. Without effort, nothing can be attained.

In the early ages of the Church public penances were imposed for certain sins. Penitents were obliged to put on sackcloth and ashes, to fast on bread and water, to spend their days in mourning over their sins and their nights in vigils and prayers, to give alms, etc. The law of the Church imposed many canonical penances. A few will be of interest. Breaking the Sabbath meant three days on bread and water, talking and laughing in Church during divine service, ten days. A rebellious child was punished from three to ten years. Fornication, three years; adultery, from five to ten years of public penance; apostasy from the faith, ten years of public penance; wilful murder, public penance for life. During the entire period, the penitents were excluded from Church and the sacraments, except in case of death. They were required to stand in penitential garb near the entrance of the Church and beg the prayers of the faithful. Sometimes, on account of their good disposition, their punishment was shortened or remitted altogether by indulgences. Even kings and emperors underwent these public canonical penances. A case in point is the Emperor Theodosius of Constantinople. Having sanctioned the wanton slaughter of the unarmed civilians of Thessalonica, he was forced to do public penance for eight months, before St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, readmitted him to divine service (Butler's ''Lives,'' on St. Ambrose).

If mortification is hard, it likewise has a proportionate reward. We read in the life of St. Fructuosus, Bishop of Taragon, who because he refused to worship false gods, was condemned to be burned at the stake on a certain Friday morning. In his day, the Christians not only abstained from meat on Friday, but also fasted until 3 P. M. from all food and drink. Fasting, he and his two deacon companions were led to execution. Accompanied by a vast throng of friends, both Christian and Pagan, they refused all the proferred refreshments because they were determined to keep the Friday law and, even in death, to hold fast to the faith. Tied to the stake, they expired before the flames reached their bodies. Heaven opened to receive them with crowns of glory (Butler's ''Lives,'' on St. Fructuosus).

Mortification is difficult. How much easier in the end is the path of vice and sin? Enjoyment and pleasure are short, repentance and suffering for our follies long and unconsoling. Is the way of unbridled passion easy? Only at first. When the newness of the pleasure wears off, there comes the pain and disease, the shame and the degradation of it all. Is it easy to be burdened for the rest of one's life with an incurable social disease or perhaps with paralysis or even insanity or feeblemindedness? Or is it easy to die a slow death of moral slavery, misery and wretchedness? The longer we defer penitence and mortification after the habit of sin has been acquired, the harder it is to begin. The sooner we begin at the very dawn of reason to accustom ourselves to voluntary self-control, the easier, the safer, the healthier, the more morally clean, the more spiritually sound will be our later life. If we deny ourselves what is lawful, it will be easy to abstain from what is unlawful. On the other hand if we insist upon doing all that is not positively sinful, all that we are allowed, we shall soon do very much that is not allowed.

''Mortification is dangerous and injurious to health and life.'' This is not true, if moderation and prudence are observed. There is far more danger of injuring our health and shortening our life through excessive pleasure and self-gratification. For every one that harms himself by self-denial, there are a thousand who dig their own graves by self-indulgence. ''His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust'' (Job 20. 11). A reasonable, steady, gradually increasing spirit of mortification has not harmed anyone. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, living about 400 years before Christ, attained the ripe old age of 140. One day, being asked to what circumstance he ascribed his unusual health and long life, he answered: ''I never fully satisfy my appetite. When I get up from the table I could always eat more with pleasure.'' St. Basil admonishes us to subdue our fleshly desires, so as to sharpen the spiritual sense and increase interior peace and joy. Self-control fortifies the will and pacifies the stormy heart. Christ commanded the storm and the great calm ensued. Our disorderly affections are constantly brewing storms in our mind and heart. If we command the storms by rising above them we shall triumph. Even in peaceful waters, the holes of a ship must be closed to the waters. So too the portals of our hearts, namely the five senses, must be kept in custody and closed to outside evil influences. Every chance-comer disturbs us. Open the doors and windows on a cold day and the temperature falls rapidly. So too does the soul lose its even temperature by dissipating its powers in a life of self-indulgence. If we would suffer no harm but derive much benefit from self-denial we must guard against all ill-advised methods and endeavor to submit in all obedience to our spiritual director. (See Meschler, "Three Fundamental Principles of the Spiritual Life.")

CHAPTER XVI

EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT

The preceding chapter dealt with interior and exterior mortification. Between the exterior senses and the higher will of the soul is found the very important domain of the emotions.

The emotions spring not from the rational but from the sensitive appetite. There are two sets of emotions, namely the concupiscible and the irascible. The former deals with good and evil as such, the latter deals with the difficulty of surmounting evil in the attainment of good. The ruling force of the former is love; of the latter, hope.

We love the good and hate the evil as such. When absent from us we desire the good for the future, when present to us we rejoice in its possession. On the contrary we hate the evil as such, we are averse to its approach, saddened by actual contact with it. In a word the good is an object of love, desire, joy; the evil, a matter of hatred, aversion and sorrow.

In the second group of emotions we consider the difficulty of attaining the good. The object of hope is a future good, difficult but possible of attainment. In so far it differs from a mere wish or desire of the good as such. Compared with the old man who looks back upon a life of experience, the inexperienced but ardent youth has his whole future before him. Hence we say he lives in hope, deeming nearly everything possible of attainment. The old man is more inclined to be skeptical and despondent, unless he looks beyond himself and his bitter experience towards the sunlight of divine grace and divine hope. Hope tends to the good, despair turns away from the good, to feed upon the hopelessness of evil.

Fear doesn't go quite so far as despair, yet it, too, feeds on evil (in the form of obstacles to the good). The object of fear is some evil that hinders or threatens the attainment of a future good. Lacking courage, fear dwells upon the difficulty of attainment. On the other hand, courage, born of hope, spurns fear. Impediments become opportunities. Whereas fear succumbs at times to slight obstacles, courage will not yield as long as there is the slightest hope of success. Courage grows bold in hoping even against hope.

Baffled in the attempt to overcome evil or attain the good, we become angry. Objectively we get angry because we are sad, subjectively because we harbor the desire for revenge. Sadness is the evil we failed to overcome and revenge under a false cloak is the good we seek. Anger-sadness grows out of impeded desires, thwarted hopes and frustrated ambitions; the desire of revenge is caused by another's disregard of us, whether it be mere neglect, or disdain or even outrage and contempt. We are angry at persons and things because we see in them the obstacles to our cherished hope and peace and happiness. Hence anger is wrong only when it is unjust or excessive. Anger becomes sinful when it wilfully plans or executes revenge, for inflicting evil upon our enemy can in no way be of any good to us. In as far as revenge seems sweet and appears good, it is an illusion and will become a source of further ill, perhaps even of crime, if unchecked in time.

St. Thomas sums up the emotions in this order: love and hatred, desire and aversion, hope and desperation, fear and boldness, anger, joy and sorrow. We love the good and hate the evil as such before we desire a certain good or become averse to a definite evil. Desire enkindles hope of attainment despite difficulty. Aversion leads to melancholy and desperation. Fear keeps us from attainment because it rivets our eye principally, if not solely, upon the difficulty thereof. Whereas courage makes light of and conquers well nigh every difficulty, converting hardships into golden opportunities for achievement and merit. Inconsiderate anger arising from thwarted hopes seeks vainly for peace and happiness in revenge. If we follow in the footsteps of love, desire, hope, courage, we shall be crowned with present joy and future glory. But if by misguided hatred and aversion we are led to vain fears and yield to excessive and unjustified anger we shall reap present sorrow and unending misery.

In themselves, the emotions are indifferent and without moral value. In so far as they accompany or follow the exercise of the mind and will, in intensifying the voluntary desires, they become instruments of moral good or evil. They are bad counselors but powerful helpers.

Because of the original fall, the emotions often make their demands without the foreknowledge of the mind and permission of the will. They even continue their attacks after right reason urges self-restraint. If the will yields to blind and misguided emotion, sin results. If the will checks and controls them, virtue ensues. Christian ethics aim at directing them towards their proper object and holding them within bounds.

A Source of Evil

If the emotions are given free rein, they reduce man to the semblance of the beast. In that event they become our greatest enemies. ''The sensitive appetite,'' says Luis de Granada, ''is the arsenal which supplies sin with its most dangerous arms. It is the vulnerable 'part' of the soul, a second Eve, frail and inconstant, heeding the wiles of the old serpent and dragging with her in her fall the unhappy Adam, that is, the superior 'part' of the soul, the seat of the will and of the understanding. Original sin is here manifested in all its power. Here the malignity of its poison is concentrated—Here is the field of man's combats, defeats and victories.'' Virtue is the result of victory; vice, of defeat. Virtue to him who knows how to make the passions serve the higher will, vice to him who fails to practice this lesson.

A Blessing in Disguise

If the emotions are curbed, they give facility and perseverance in good, they urge us to heroic heights of virtue and merit. God gave them to us as aids to the good. When nobly stirred, they become an earnest of spiritual intensity at the bar of duty. Man devotes himself wholeheartedly to his work. He perseveres and succeeds. The indifferent and phlegmatic man cannot put heart and soul into his work; the emotional man does. Christ chose the ardent Saul to become the zealous Paul. The doughty Peter was chosen leader in preference to the meek and gentle John. Under the guidance of law and reason, the emotions insure ease and constancy and even heroism in virtue. The apathetic young man went away from our Lord, sad and disheartened, because he lacked courage to give up his riches and dedicate himself to the higher vocation, the following of Christ. On another occasion, Jesus, rewarding faith, healed a blind beggar. In token of gratitude, the man born blind, insisted he had been healed by Jesus. The Jewish leaders, spiritually blinded by obstinacy and revenge, cast the poor man out of the synagogue. Hereupon Jesus, the Divine Healer and consoler, came to reward him, because he feared God rather than men. That the final outcome should always outweigh the momentary advantage is likewise brought home to us by the wisdom of a fable. Aesop relates the fable of the bat, the birds and the beasts. The birds and the beasts determined upon war. The bat remained aloof from either side: war was averted and peace declared. The listless bat desired to share the blessings of peace. The rejoicing birds rejected him. The feasting beasts threatened to devour him.

God gave us love, courage and hope to destroy the monsters of indifference, cowardice and despair. He gave us the hope for everlasting delight to wean us from earthly pleasures. He would have us vanquish avarice by generosity and kindness. He would cure our lust by self-denial and prayer. All alone on the mountain of prayer we learn to strive after the pure and unsullied delights of spiritual love. The craving of the palate, He would have us subdue by fast and abstinence on the appointed days. Anger and revenge should yield to meekness and forgiveness. Envy and hatred must cede to love. Sloth is to be mortified by diligence and zeal. The guiding principle therefore is the mortification of all the passions. Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, so that men could pray to God in silence and reverence. Likewise must we with great zeal and energy drive out all the offshoots of inordinate passion from the heart, so that God can peacefully take up His abode therein. In order to purify our emotions and restrain them, it is well to foster a special devotion to the Sacred Heart and the Precious Blood of Jesus, for therein we find a perfect union of divine love and human mortification.

VIGILANCE, THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Only constant vigilance will help us to love the good and hate the evil, as God demands. Moses, after giving the Israelites the Commandments of God, bade them one and all: "Keep thyself, therefore, and thy soul carefully. Forget not the words that thy eyes have seen, and let them not go out of thy heart all the days of thy life. Thou shalt teach them to thy sons and to thy grandsons" (Deut. 4. 9). "Thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes. And thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house" (Deut. 6. 7–9).

Considering the many dangers to which our soul is exposed, the difficulty and the delicacy of the task of salvation, constant vigilance is indispensable. To be in the world and yet not of it, to live in the flesh and yet be guided by the spirit, to be a child of our time and yet not forget the riches of eternity, in a word to be without offence unto the day of Christ, demand not only the assistance of divine grace but likewise, on our part, constant vigilance. To act always like a true Child of God, we must place ourselves in His holy presence. Seneca gives this counsel: "Always imagine yourself in the presence of one for whom you have the greatest respect and refrain from all that you would not do in his presence" (Epist. 25). No better motto could a Christian follow out in practice: God sees me, God hears me, God will one day judge me. This very thought begets caution, prudence, watchfulness. These in turn demand restraint, mortification. Hence self-denial prepares us for the most efficacious means to our final end, namely, living in God's holy presence. When a consul or ambassador is about to address the King or President, he studies his appearance, his whole bearing and conduct, so that he may present himself in a pleasing and dignified way. In like manner must a Christian, to be presentable before God, watch himself at all times, whether at work or at prayer, alone or with others, at home or abroad. A certain modesty and reserve is always in demand, measuring up our words and actions to the law of God. The many-eyed mysterious creature, mentioned in Ezechiel 1. 18, might fittingly portray to us the need of vigilance on all sides. Our Lord, about to enter upon His bitter passion and death, cautioned the beloved three and, in their name, all Christians to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation and succumb to it.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIAN ZEAL

There is a sloth of the mind and of the will, as well as bodily and spiritual sloth. Sluggishness, impracticability, day-dreaming, the building of air castles, the unrestrained wanderings of the imagination are forms of mental laziness. The slothful will manifests itself in discontentment and grumbling over the least unpleasant and uncomfortable situation. Irresolute, it delays and mopes along without definite plan or serious intention. The body shows tendencies to sloth by laziness, slowness, love of ease and comfort, aversion to labor and hardship, overindulgence in food, drink and sleep. The soul likewise shows a certain reluctance to duty, a distaste for spiritual things, weariness in doing good.

Spiritual sloth is opposed to the highest gift of the Holy Ghost, namely wisdom, which gives us a relish for the things of God and helps to direct our mind and heart towards the final goal. Sloth is a subtle enemy, for it hides its deathly fangs beneath the wings of false prudence. It wants to pass for discretion. It almost persuades us it is a virtue. It is like a friendly pickpocket, who robs us without our knowledge. It dulls the mind, weakens the will, depresses the spirit, arouses the flesh, paralyzes our native energies, robs us of precious time and heavenly merit. The most important things in our spiritual life it would prey upon and destroy. In so far as it is opposed to the highest wisdom, it is assuredly consummate folly.

Sloth is not merely foolish but likewise unchristian. No sluggard can claim fellowship with Christ. Jesus' whole life was one of untiring zeal and uninterrupted activity. How often did He not, after a hard day's work of preaching and healing the sick, spend the entire night in prayer! Who can measure the labor and suffering and deprivation that Jesus underwent for our edification and salvation?

The apostles also were models of diligence. On one occasion, after laboring all night and catching nothing, at the Master's bidding they let down their nets. Later on they left everything to follow Christ, sharing His poverty, His sufferings and persecutions, His labors. How zealous were not the martyrs of old, the confessors, the virgins, who sacrificed everything, even life itself, for Christ!

Sloth is not natural either to man or brute. Nature is always at work. Ceaselessly do the sun, moon and stars fulfill their appointed tasks. Behold how the squirrel, the chipmunk, the gopher, the field mouse, gather up food for winter! The bees are not only organized for work, but they even kill the lazy drones. "He that will not work, neither let him live" seems to be their motto. In building their hives and storing up for the future, the bees put shiftless men to shame. Holy Scripture says: "Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn wisdom: which although she hath no guide, nor master, nor captain, provideth her meat for herself in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?—Thou wilt fold thy hands a little to sleep: and want shall come upon thee, as a traveler, and poverty as a man armed. But if thou be diligent, thy harvest shall come as a fountain, and want shall flee far from thee" (Prov. 6. 6–11). Diligence, therefore, is the mother of thrift and happiness, as sloth is the father of want and misery.

Diligence and zeal persevere to the end, in spite of the most untoward circumstances. Christ did not descend from the Altar of the Cross until the work of salvation was completed. Nor must we forsake the altar of duty until the end crowns our work. God who calls us to the combat will give us victory. He sees our weakness, He will support us when we falter, He will reward us when we conquer. Too many make the grievous error of comparing the difficulties of virtue with the pleasures of sin. A good Christian, on the contrary, weighs in the balance of divine prudence the labors which precede virtue with the hardships that follow vice. What are the fleeting pleasures of sin compared with the eternal happiness of virtue? Realizing these facts, may we shake off all false security and manfully arm ourselves to the teeth against the alluring siren of sloth! A lazy soldier is a nuisance in the army. A wounded soldier who keeps his courage is an honor to himself and an asset to his country. Our valor as soldiers in the battle of life consists in ignoring the attacks and wounds and holding our ground firmly, never surrendering, never yielding. Philip Doddridge expresses this attitude:

"Awake my soul! stretch every nerve,
And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown."

The *shortness of time* likewise urges zeal. Time is too valuable and all too short to waste in sloth. Time diligently applied purchases an eternal recompense, time misspent is lost forever. Christ warns us to labor hard and diligently during the daytime of life, lest the night of death find us empty-handed: ''I must work the works of Him that sent me, whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work'' (John 9. 4).

Cure for Sloth

The best remedy for sloth, next to hard labor and something to work for, is mortification.

Bodily penance quickens the mind, strengthens the will and inures the body to useful work and necessary suffering. It overcomes the heaviness of the flesh and gives joy to the soul. Daniel and his three companions fared better physically and spiritually on pulse and water than did the Chaldean youths on meats and wines (Daniel 1. 15, 20).

When tempted to gluttony or sensuality, vices closely allied to sloth, we must deny ourselves a favorite dish, and give ourselves zealously to fasting and prayer. ''Then perhaps the devil,'' says Granada, ''may fear to tempt you, seeing that you convert his snares into occasions of virtue, and he affords you opportunities of greater good. Above all things, fly idleness. Even in hours of relaxation do not be wholly unoccupied. And, on the other hand, do not be so absorbed in your labors, that you cannot from time to time raise your heart to God and treat with Him in prayer'' (Luis de Granada: ''Sinner's Guide,'' Chap. 36, p. 373).

CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIAN COURAGE

Fear is the trepidation of the mind on account of some impending evil that cannot be overcome without considerable difficulty. The soul, as it were, contracts and recoils upon itself and, in case of great fear, is stunned and temporarily paralyzed. The understanding is confused, the imagination and emotions aroused, the nerves tingle with excitement. Moderate and reasonable fear is the part of prudence. Living in the presence of God and guided by His holy law, the Christian fears to offend his loving Master. As a good wife dreads to offend her husband, as a dutiful child fears to displease its mother, so too a good Christian dreads nothing so much as offending His heavenly Father. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is the guardian angel of innocence, and the support of true penitence. Job is an example of the former, David of the latter. Fear keeps innocence from falling. Job feared even the approach of sin. He said: "I feared all my works, knowing that Thou didst not spare the offender" (Job 9. 28). He realized that in the sight of God, all men are sinners. Hence he probed deeply into the accusations of his friends to ascertain the extent of his guilt. The fear of the Lord, it was, that brought out, in the final analysis, Job's triumph; it kept him a humble and obedient child of heaven.

David, who had felt the death grip of sin, prayed God to pierce his flesh with a holy fear (Ps. 118. 120). The piercing thorn of fear was to him a warning for the future. Ecclesiasticus 1. 27 avers: "The fear of the Lord driveth out sin." St. Paul warns us to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2. 12). He means a prudent fear which excludes false security and includes filial confidence in God.

There are also unreasonable fears. The scrupulous dread of sin, common to hysterical and nervous persons; the ignoble fear that induces some men to forsake the unpleasant and disagreeable elements of duty; the cowardly fear that causes false shame and false sense of honor; the fear of social inferiority, which prompts many nowadays to keep up false appearances, to live and dress far beyond their means; the so-called religious fear of appearing more pious than the rest, which is often an excuse for delaying Communion, or omitting family prayer, or skipping afternoon and evening devotions.

I shall treat only of the scrupulous fear and the ignoble dread of difficulty in doing good. The others stand condemned without argument or sympathy. We pity the scrupulous, we encourage the fainthearted.

The Scrupulous Fear

The mole is a pest in the garden. The mole of fear causes desolation in many souls. The sunflower of Christian perfection thrives only in the sunlight of joy and courage and divine hope. In the shadow of fear, cowardice and despondency, the most beautiful virtues droop and die. He who cannot master fear must forever renounce the bright and cheerful path of perfection.

Above all must the scrupulous man, the hysterically inclined woman, beware of this soul-destroying fiend. In scrupulosity, fear fixes its eye solely on evil. It imagines evils where they do not exist and exaggerates them where they do exist. The scrupulous man is a martyr without honor, a slave of his emotions. By a firm mind, a determined will and a spirit obedient to our director, we can lessen the importunity of the feelings, so that they may not always be insisting upon the dangers and difficulties that lie before us. We must therefore strive to make our feelings obey like a well-broken hound that starts and barks at the first noise he hears, but at a word from his master lies down quietly.

In most cases that which is charming or terrifying in temporal things is the effect of our imagination, which exaggerates their appearances. In reality only eternity is blessed or terrible. To take the edge off vain fear, frequently repeat: It is three-quarters imagination. A second way to overcome fear is to grasp the difficulty, get at the bottom of it and rob it of its terrors. Similar fears in the past proved quite bearable, they lasted only a short time. Besides, time dulls the edge of difficulty. A third consideration: Fear makes puppets of us. Worse than children we see monsters everywhere. We seem to wear green spectacles and like drunken men see everything exaggerated or doubled. We are slaves of a perverted imagination. We must, like men, rigidly correct our disordered fancy. The fourth remedy is prayer, confidence in God, obedience to our confessor. Since our judgment is abnormal, we must let another, a spiritual doctor, direct us.

A fifth remedy is readiness and facility in confessing not only to our regular confessor but also to another. Confession is a relief, if the scrupulant, in case of necessity or when his regular confessor is not at hand, is humble enough to go to any prudent and learned confessor, and sufficiently obedient to avoid needless detail and worry. By sealing his secrets in the heart of God, he is able to forget the past failures and weakness, and look up with head erect to the future.

A sixth remedy, especially for the nervous scrupulant, is the daily adherence to a set program of spiritual exercises, moderate outdoor work and play with cheerful companions. Music and song, wit and humor, and even some innocent hobby, rest the nerves and take the mind away from itself. On the other hand it is well to avoid being alone too much, which brings on brooding; and on the other, to keep away from immoderate noise and excitement, which irritates the nerves. In dieting, cottage cheese, pure milk and fresh eggs are preferable to rich meats; rye or whole wheat bread is better than white bread, potatoes and rich pastries. Fresh fruits aid digestion and fresh greens are conducive to sleep. Celery, spinach, lettuce, onions, radishes and cabbage are indicated.

Ignoble Fear

Christ taught us how to overcome fear and anguish. When the blood oozed forth from His pores, He suffered calmly, patiently, with resignation. Are we not disciples of Christ and soldiers of God? Albrecht Dürer pictures the Christian as a noble knight, galloping forward on the uncertain path of life, undismayed by death and the devil, specter-like trotting beside him. The good Christian need fear only sin and the occasions of sin which might induce him to offend God. Sufferings, hardships and death are but stepping-stones to eternal trophies.

Many Christians abandon themselves to a life of ease, pleasure and sin, because they are afraid of hardships and difficulties. They lack courage and fortitude, and succumb to the many-horned monster, fear. The servant of Eliseus was frightened at the numbers that were coming armed against his master, until God opened his eyes to see that Eliseus was surrounded by a still greater number of defenders. A like fear leads men to reject virtue, because they know not the succors which God reserves for it.

If we are serious in repentance and diligent in self-denial, if we make use of the many means of grace, if we invite the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us, if we coöperate with our Savior and earnestly strive to profit by his teachings and example, virtue becomes relatively easy. God comes to our rescue on every cross-road of life with those wonderful inventions of love, the sacraments, and prayer. So that everyone, even the weakest, can work out his salvation, if he but courageously does his part. Jesus says: "My yoke is sweet and my burden light" (Matt. 11. 30). To nature it is indeed a yoke, but to grace it is sweet and light. God assures us: "I will draw them with the . . . bands of love: And I will be to them as one that taketh off the yoke on their jaws" (Osee 11. 4). Hence David could truthfully say: "The justices (laws) of the Lord are right, rejoicing hearts: the commandment of the Lord is lightsome, enlightening the eyes. . . . The judgments of the Lord . . . are more to be desired than gold and precious stones: and sweeter than honey" (Ps. 18. 9, 11).

We are tormented by evil passions and sinful inclinations, we have been weakened by sin and vice, but God has given us the power to crucify the old man, so that the body of sin may be destroyed and that we may serve sin no longer. God encourages us by the pen of the prophet: "Fear not, for I am with thee: turn not aside, for I am thy God: I have strengthened thee, and have helped thee, and the right hand of my Just One (Jesus Christ) hath upheld thee. Behold all that fight against thee shall be confounded and ashamed, they shall be as nothing, and the men shall perish that strive against thee—for I am the Lord thy God, who take thee by the hand and say to thee: Fear not, I have helped thee'' (Isaias 41. 10–13). He likewise promises to give to all of good will and courage a new heart and a new spirit: ''I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh,—that they may walk in my Commandments, and keep my judgments and do them, and that they may be my people and I may be their God'' (Ezechiel 11. 19). The royal psalmist exclaims: ''The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? . . . If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear'' (Ps. 26. 1–3).

If God pledges to give us a new spirit, changing our heart of stone to one of flesh, if He promises to consume all our enemies and be our personal helper in every struggle, surely we have reason to trust in Him.

God's law is *not above our nature, if we cooperate with grace.* God reassures us through Moses: ''This commandment that I command thee this day is not above thee, nor far off from thee. Nor is it in heaven, that thou should say: which of us can go up to heaven to bring it unto us, and we may hear and fulfil it in work? Nor is it beyond the sea, that thou mayst excuse thyself and say: Which of us can cross the sea and bring it unto us, that we may hear and do that which is commanded? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayst do it. Consider that I have set before thee this day, life and good, and on the other hand death and evil: that thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and walk in His ways, and keep His Commandments . . . and He may multiply thee, and bless thee in the land which thou shalt go in to possess. But if thy heart be turned away, so that thou wilt not hear . . . I foretell thee this day thou shalt perish, . . . I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life, that both thou and thy seed may live: and that thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and obey His voice and adhere to Him, for He is thy life and the length of thy days . . .'' (Deut. 30. 11–20).

Love makes everything easy. Mothers go through fire and flood to save their children. Devoted husbands slave and save year in and year out for an invalid wife. ''True love of God,'' says St. Peter Chrysologus, ''finds nothing hard, nothing bitter, nothing difficult. What weapon, what wounds, what pains, what death, can conquer true love? As an impenetrable armor it defies all attacks, and fears not even death, but triumphs over everything.''

Perfect love goes even farther. It finds joy in laboring and suffering for the beloved. St. Paul, filled with an eager desire to give Christ everything, even life itself, exclaims: ''Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword?'' (Rom. 8. 35.) Worldlings cannot understand the heroic love of the apostles, of the martyrs and virgins. They cannot conceive how others should love what they abhor, or abhor what they love. Love, it was, that enabled them to trample under foot all that the worldling holds dear: pleasures, riches, honors, preferments.

If God's grace and the cooperation of love on man's part rendered the scourge, the prison, the stake, welcome to God's servants, will they not also lighten the yoke of His Commandments for us? Will not that power which supported the just under fasts, vigils, austerities and sufferings of every kind enable us to bear the burden of the Commandments? Alas, how feeble is our understanding of the power of love and the efficacy of divine grace!

If the life of the just here on earth is a fight unto death, that of the wicked is a blind and hopeless struggle ending in failure and disgrace. Life's journey is long and weary. A blind man will tire sooner because he frequently stumbles and falls. The sinner, blinded by passions, stumbles over his own misdeeds. The just man, guided by reason and divine law, clearly sees and avoids the rocks and pitfalls; and hence travels with greater ease and safety. ''The path of the just,'' says Solomon, ''as a shining light goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day: the way of the wicked is darksome, they know not where they fall'' (Prov. 4. 18).

An Example of Grace

St. Cyprian relates to his friend Donatus how divine grace transformed his spirit of weakness and self-indulgence to one of courage and self-restraint: ''When I walked in darkness, when I was tossed about by the tempests of this world, I knew not what life was, because I was deprived of light and truth. I regarded as impossible all that God's grace promised to do for my conversion and salvation. I would not believe that man could be born again, and by virtue of Baptism receive a new life and spirit, which, while leaving his exterior untouched, would entirely reform him within. I urged that it was impossible to uproot inveterate vice. Is temperance possible, I asked, to one long accustomed to a sumptuous table? Will he who has been clothed in purple willingly put on a plain and modest dress? Will he who found all his happiness in honors and dignities willingly forego them and be content to lead a quiet and obscure life? Will he who was accustomed to travel with a grand retinue now be contented to travel unattended? Former habits will cling to him and struggle for mastery. Intemperance will solicit him, pride will inflate him, honors will allure him, anger will inflame him, and sensuality will blind and overpower him. These were the reflections in which I frequently indulged. I was bound by numerous habits of vice from which I felt I never could be freed, and which I encouraged and strengthened by this very distrust. But my sins were no sooner washed away in the waters of Baptism when a new light shone upon my soul, now purified from all stains. By the reception of the Holy Spirit I was born to a new life. Suddenly, as if by a miracle, doubt gave place to certainty; my darkness was dissipated; what heretofore appeared difficult had now become easy; the insurmountable obstacles I feared had vanished completely. I clearly saw that the life of the flesh with all its failings was of man, and that the new life to which I had come was of God. You know, dear Donatus from what the Holy Spirit has delivered me, and what he has bestowed upon me. He has delivered me from the slavery of vice and has restored me to the true liberty of virtue. You know all this, and that, so far from boasting, I am only publishing the glory of God. It is not pride but a sentiment of gratitude which prompts me to speak this wonderful transformation, which is due only to God. For it is evident that the power to abandon sin is no less the effect of divine grace than the will to commit it is the effect of human frailty" (Cyprian, Bk. II, Epistle 2; "Sinner's Guide," Chap. 27, pp. 286–288).

Unless our love for God is reinforced and supported by the virtue of fortitude and the disposition of courage we cannot overcome the difficulties that obstruct our path. Courage is the hammer that beats the raw iron of difficulty into the steel tool of virtue. With this spiritual hammer we can shape and fashion our lives after the Model, Jesus Christ. Pluck, like the rod of Moses, enables us to work wonders against the enemies of salvation. With the rod of fearlessness, we make the world, the flesh and the devil contribute their share to our triumph. On the other hand, without courage the search for virtue and happiness is futile. Rest is attained by labor; victory ensues from battle; joy is born of sorrow; the sweetness of God's love is purchased by the bitterness of self-sacrifice.

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

If the labors, sufferings and tortures of our Lord cannot wean us from fear and sloth, our faith is indeed on the waning point. St. Paul bids us to think diligently upon Christ dying on the Cross (Hebr. 12. 3). Rev. Luis de Granada writes: "It is a marvelous example in every respect; if we consider his sufferings, none could be greater; if we contemplate the victim, none could be nobler; if we dwell upon the motive, it was the highest degree of love; for He who was innocence itself suffered and died to redeem us from our iniquities. The heavens were filled with awe at the spectacle, the earth trembled, the rocks were rent, all nature was moved. Will man alone be insensible and refuse to imitate the example which God came on earth to give? Shall we be so slothful, so presumptuous as to wish to win heaven by a life of luxurious ease, when suffering and labor were the portion of God on earth and of all His followers? . . . If you wish to share in their glory, you must participate in their labors. If you would reign with them in heaven, you must suffer with them on earth" ("Sinner's Guide," Chap. 48, Section 2, p. 485).

Lives of the Martyrs

Another excellent means of acquiring courage to face the obstacles and overcome the difficulties of the spiritual life is reflection upon the lives of the martyrs. Can one remain unmoved at the heroism of mere maidens and children making the supreme sacrifice? No kind of suffering or torture was too cruel for them. Some were beheaded, others crucified: some were burned alive; others were thrown to the beasts; some were cast into cauldrons of boiling oil, others were compelled to walk upon burning coals, some were tied to wild horses or chariots and dragged over sharp, stony places, others were hacked to pieces with iron hooks; some were skinned alive, others were sawed in two or buried alive; some met their fate at the hands of tyrants and persecutors, others were killed by false lovers, and still others met death by the hands of their own father. (Ibid. p. 483). What shall we say of the modern martyrs in China and Russia? In Mason-ridden Mexico thousands died for Christ, shouting: "Long live Jesus, the King."

Were they not human and sensitive as we are? Will not the same God assist and reward us who assisted and rewarded them? Seeing them die from hunger, cannot we fast or abstain for a day or two? Seeing a St. Stephen stoned to death while praying for his enemies, or a St. James hurled from the pinnacle of the temple, to be clubbed and beheaded, yet calmly on his knees praying for his persecutors, can we refuse to bend the knee in prayer for our enemies? Beholding their tortures, can we refuse to deny our will and mortify our passions? Following them in dark prisons where they were a shining light to their companions, can we neglect the light of grace and fail to give others a good example? If the martyrs submitted their bodies to the wheel and rack, to fire and sword, how can we refuse to chastise our body and bring it into subjection? If the Mexican priests and people were hunted down and shot like dogs for the "hated name of Jesus Christ," what ought we across the Rio Grande to suffer and endure for the sweetest of all names!

Heroism in the Home

Home life now and then is brightened by examples of noble lives, spent for others. Here we find a widowed mother sacrificing herself daily for her fatherless children; there we see a widower playing both father and mother. Here we witness a man in the prime of life foregoing a home of his own, to care for an aged father or an afflicted brother or sister. There a girl dedicates her motherly instinct to the poor lepers and outcasts of society. Here an aged father bends low in heroic resignation over the bier of his son. There a mother frail and tender offers her only son to the priesthood. Catholic heroism sends thousands of girls to bury their beauty and earthly aspirations in a convent and to lead lives linked with God. Catholic heroism dedicates the finest of her youth to the seminary, where they are molded and formed unto a life of self-sacrifice. What shall we say of the heroism of that vast army of Catholic teaching sisterhoods, brotherhoods and religious priesthoods grinding out their lives to train the mind and heart of our youth!

Since fear and discouragement are the source of many spiritual failures and disasters, since they condemn many noble geniuses to mere mediocrity, we should pay more attention to their conquest in our own life. Dante pictured the victims of vain fear and cowardice as common dust, unworthy of glory or hatred. St. Teresa, speaking of her own difficulties, says: ''If at the beginning of some good work I overcame the opposition of cowardly nature, I had always reason to congratulate myself. The greater the terror, the more joy does the soul experience from that which seemed so difficult. If I had to give advice on this point, I would say: learn never to pay attention to natural fear and never to meet God's Goodness with distrust, if He inspires us with some high thought or noble work.''

“Cleanse the fountain
  If you would
Purify the stream. . . .”
—A. Bronson Alcott.

CHAPTER XIX

MODESTY, THE GUARDIAN OF CHASTITY

''Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into temptation'' (Mark 14. 38).

In order to draw near to God, you must hold yourself aloof from the spirit and dangers of the world. You must live in the world, as Christ told His disciples, but you dare not be of the world. You cannot be infatuated with the vanities and seductions of the world and love God at the same time. St. James says: ''Whosoever will be a friend of this world becometh an enemy of God'' (Jas. 4. 4). The world is full of dangers and pitfalls, allurements and enticements for the unwise and unwary. Some of the dangers to be guarded against are vanity, excessive love for pleasure, the unruly indulgence of the senses and certain exterior dangers to virtue.

VANITY

''Praise not a man for his beauty, neither despise him for his look. The bee is small among flying things, but her fruit hath the chiefest sweetness. Glory not in apparel at any time, and be not exalted in the day of thy honor: For the works of the highest only are wonderful, and His works are glorious and secret and hidden'' (Ecclus. 11. 2–5). ''Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain: the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised'' (Prov. 31. 30). God rebuked the vainglorious King of Tyre: ''Thy heart was lifted up with thy beauty. Thou hast lost thy wisdom in thy beauty, I have cast thee to the ground'' (Ezech. 28. 17).

Pride makes us esteem ourselves: vanity makes us crave the esteem of others. Vanity is pride of dress and appearance. It is not the deep subtle pride of the mind and will, but the pride that appeals to the senses. It is the desire to appear or look better than others. ''The soul of the vain man,'' says Shakspeare, ''is in his clothes.'' It is a kind of self-intoxication. Vain people are, so to speak, mad in their desire to please by their appearance. Lavater declares: ''She who studies her glass, neglects her heart.'' Pope states: ''Every man has just so much vanity as he lacks understanding.''

Vanity is frequently the cause of indecent attire. If we must beware of the woman dressed up ''fit to kill'' how much more must we be on our guard against that most foolish sort of vanity, which affects risque or even positively indecent attire. Were it not for the insane concupiscence of the eye, such bedlam improprieties would disgust every beholder. If women respect themselves as the temple of the Holy Ghost they will not try to attract unlawful attention by the display of the body, but rather fascinate others by the beauty of their soul, the loveliness of their virtue. Boldness and immodesty in dress lowers their dignity and paves the way to ridicule and insult; no matter how innocent the girl may be or how indifferent her intention, the psychic evil effect is produced. Does a good girl desire to attract evil eyes and evil hearts by parading what common decency instinctively forbids?

Only well-ordered minds and firm wills can withstand the insane sex-appeal of immodestly clad women. Therefore women, knowing the weakness of man in yielding only too often to the lower appeal, are very much responsible for the degradation of man. Is it not woman's mission to uplift and elevate man? Will mere thoughtlessness and vanity excuse her from this, her life's work? If men would go in public as some women do, they would be put into jail for endangering public morals.

Father Martin Scott, S.J., says that immodest dress leads to moral suicide. ''God put the instinct of attractiveness in women, in order to induce honest love and marriage. The way some women dress induces only dishonorable love. . . . It implies no esteem, no honest purpose, no idea whatever of true affection. Nothing fades so fast as the attraction founded on animal passion. The scandalous dress of some women exposes them to lustful eyes, generates false love and lays the foundations of life-long misery.''

Vanity lowers our true dignity. It makes fools of us. Vanity makes us ridiculous because it rates outward *ap-*

pearances above inner worth. Vanity occasions many disappointments and failures. How many a silly girl marries a rich fool! How many a superannuated dunce falls in love with a doll.

There is a species of vanity which leads to moral ruin. Many girls, to keep up appearances and social standing sacrifice their honor and virtue to the Moloch of feminine vanity. The modern "sheik" and the vain dude are often guilty of the same stupendous folly as their unfortunate sisters.

Even the best of actions, yea the greatest of virtues, are subject to vanity. With insidious cleverness, it hurls poisonous darts into every good thought and noble deed. Thackeray says: "Vanity is often the unseen spur to many actions." Vanity, or at least the occasional inclination to this weakness, is in the best of us, and hence we must endeavor to overcome it by self-knowledge and self-discipline. The more we hate deception, the more shall we appreciate genuine worth. The farther we recede from deceptive outward appearance, the nearer shall we approach sterling character.

Some desire to have everything they see. This desire of the eyes leads either to avarice or bankruptcy. Learn to control and moderate your desire of having useless things, expensive luxuries. In proportion as desires grow and increase, the available funds decrease. Whims and fancies grow, while character and will-power decay. It is easier to create a desire than to satisfy it, easier to foster a habit than to master it.

Guard the Eyes

The gratification of the senses—even out of curiosity—is a rock where many a person begins the shipwreck of the soul. Eve saw that the fruit was fair to the eyes and delightful to behold, and therefore she was beguiled by Satan's appeal to her pride. Gazing intently on the forbidden fruit blinded her, so that she, even against the express prohibition of God, took of the fruit and ate (Gen. 3. 6).

Guard the eyes against all indecent objects, shameful pictures, and bad reading. Shun nasty shows and movies, for they are an insult to self-respect and to dignity. They are a danger to purity. The reason why we must carefully guard the eyes from all that savors of indecency is because they are the windows of the soul and the feeders of the mind. The eyes are to a large extent responsible for the good or bad images that arise in the mind. The temptation, if yielded to, even though it may not be a mortal sin, nevertheless is a *constant source of temptation* in the future. Too great a freedom of the eyes caused David to fall deeply. ''Death hath entered the soul by the windows.'' And our Lord assures us that whosoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery in his heart. Holy Job found it necessary to make a covenant with his eyes, not so much as to think upon a virgin, lest some unholy thought might rob him of his heavenly reunion. And the experienced and inspired wise man warns us: ''Gaze not upon a maiden, lest her beauty be a stumbling block to thee. . . . Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up, and gaze not upon another's beauty. For many have perished by the beauty of a woman'' (Ecclus. 9. 5–9). This is especially true when woman hides the beauty of her personality, only to reveal the seductive charms of her person, no matter how pure her intention may be, or how simple and guileless her trust in man. The Blessed Virgin has generally been portrayed by the great painters and sculptors as looking upward towards God, downwards with modest reserve, but never as idly gazing. We are the architects of our fate and the sculptors of our life's image. May we pattern it on this inspiring model, the acme of modesty and reserve.

Guard the Ears

Guard your ears against nasty, unbecoming talk, jokes and songs. Do not listen to everything that vile companions and rude street loafers say within your hearing. Girls, go to your mother for the information you need about your health and development. Boys, go to your father in whose confidential hearing you may discuss your problems of life. These things are too sacred for profane tongues and profane ears. ''Hedge in thy ears with thorns, hear not a wicked tongue'' (Ecclus. 28. 28). As the north wind driveth away rain, so too the rebuking tongue drives away evil talkers. Ponder the example of

St. Stanislaus, who is said to have fainted at the sound of an unbecoming word. His brother Paul was given to speaking improperly and associating with rude and indecent companions. When St. Stanislaus approached they would whisper: ‘‘Hush, change the subject. The Saint is near.’’ Daniel was unharmed in the lion’s den. By showing disgust for nasty language, in the shop or on the street, we shall command the respect of the rude and indecent, and go unharmed from the very midst of danger.

GUARD THE TONGUE

Flighty and thoughtless speech and improper joking lowers our dignity as Christian men and women. Either be silent, for silence is gold, or weigh your words, lest it be impossible to undo the scandal. ‘‘Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth, but that which is good, to the edification of faith that it may administer grace to the hearers’’ (Ephesians 4. 29). ‘‘He who does not conceal his evil thoughts rather than give them utterance deserves to have both tongue and heart pulled out and shown to the public.’’

Don’t whisper what is only suspected or surmised. Let charity rule over doubt and purity sway your heart and tongue. ‘‘Melt down thy gold and silver, and make a balance for thy words, and a just bridle for thy mouth’’ (Ecclus. 28. 29).

All uncleanness, obscenity, foolish talking and scurrility, let it not so much as be named among you. Girls, beware of the smooth-tongued flatterer and evil-tongued panderer. Young men, keep away from the siren who entangleth with her words and promises, only to seduce you like a fool drawn unwittingly to the slavery of sin, like a bird hastening to the snare. (See Prov. 7. 21 ff.)

GUARD THE MIND AND HEART

Guard against deliberate delight in evil thoughts and imaginations. ‘‘Evil thoughts are an abomination to the Lord’’ (Prov. 15. 26). They are the seed of evil desires and evil deeds. Our Savior told the Apostles: ‘‘From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man'' (Matt. 15. 19, 20). Not what goes into the mouth by way of food but what comes out of the heart by way of sinful pleasures, these defile a man. St. James portrays the conception and birth of sin in our hearts: ''Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured. Then when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. But sin, when it is completed, bringeth forth death'' (Jas. 1. 14). And St. Paul says: ''I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death (i.e., bodily subjection to concupiscence)? The grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord'' (Rom. 7. 23).

How long shall hurtful thoughts abide in us? As long as we seek gratification in them. Evil thoughts are always lurking near. We must flee from them as from a serpent. Like poison they constrict the mind. Like sparks thrown out habitually, they enkindle a conflagration in the soul. He who cherishes them invites spiritual disaster. To lessen their attractiveness, it is well frequently to divert the mind from its rut or from its pet preoccupations. A change of thought and of work refreshes the mind and strengthens it against evil fancies.

The fancy is curbed by self-denial and prayer. Nowadays youth must be trained to deny itself the pleasure of excessive light reading. Trashy novels and cheap romances fill youthful minds with pictures of life that are untrue and misleading. Frivolous romancing and day-dreaming of some wonderful hero, lover and worshipper in no-man's land unfit youth for the serious tasks of later life. St. Teresa in early childhood had learned to relish literature of the highest type, namely the ''Confessions'' of St. Augustine, the ''Letters'' of St. Jerome and the ''Imitation of Christ.'' In her teens she indulged in unreal romances so common in the Spain of her day. Later in more sober years she regretted the loss of time and the risk it involved of losing her religious vocation. In a vision she was privileged to see a niche in hell, which might have been hers, had she continued devouring love novelettes. *Modern* youth fed up on novels and yellow journals has *more* reason to fear for moral and intellectual safety.

Good literature, on the other hand, fills the mind with truth, with noble aims and high ideals, which are indispensable antidotes to materialism and pleasure-seeking. Without noble aspirations both young and old are entrapped by pleasure and sin. Pure literature elevates the mind and balances the judgment. Sane literature fills us with disgust for the sensational glitter and tinsel of the world. A few outstanding samples of general interest are: "A Modern Martyr," "Sister Therese of Lisieux," "Gemma Galgani," "Ideals of St. Francis," "The Spirit of St. Francis de Sales," "The Sinner's Guide," "Philothea," "The Creator and The Creature," "The Dream of Gerontius," "Their Story Runneth Thus," "The Hound of Heaven," and Newman's "Historical Sketches" and "Apologia."

Among secular authors: "The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table," "Twice Told Tales," "The Sketch Book," Poe's "Tales of Mystery," "Sherlock Holmes," "Sesame and Lilies," "The Idylls of the King," "The Barrier" (by Rene Bazin), "Lorna Doone," "Adam Bede." Other readable books are: "Romona," "Mr. Isaacs," "A White-Handed Saint," "The Heart of a Man," "A Girl from Mine Run," "Strike," "Mother" (by Kathleen Norris), "Across the Years," "Tangled Threads," "The Ties That Bind" (E. Porter). Also the novels of Isabel Clark and Elizabeth Jordan. No need of mentioning classics like Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, Newman, Stevenson, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Whittier, Bryant, Lowell, etc.

Guard Against Evil Desires of the Corrupt Will

Guard your will against impure desires. Desires, if deliberately caused or wilfully enjoyed, are mortal sins and have the same morality as impure deeds. A desire that could easily have been carried out, but was not, is generally only a temptation; on the other hand, if one enjoys a desire and wishes to execute it whenever the opportunity offers, he certainly commits a mortal sin. The book of Ecclesiasticus (18. 30) warns: "Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will. If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy of thy enemies.'' The bard of Avon shows the futility of an executed evil desire:

> "But she hath lost a dearer thing than life;
> And he hath won what he would lose again.
> This momentary joy breeds months of pain;
> This hot desire converts to cold disdain.
> Pure chastity is rifled of her store;
> And lust, the thief, far poorer than before."

The best remedy is to mortify the desires of seeing, having, enjoying even lawful things. Strengthen yourselves by renewing the good intention to desire only what God desires. Morning and evening and during temptation lean upon the all-pure Jesus and invoke Mary your heavenly Mother and protectress.

> "What win I, if I gain the thing I seek?
> A dream, a breath, a fleeting joy!
> Who buys a minute's mirth to wail a week,
> Or sells eternity to get a toy?
> For one sweet grape who will the vine destroy?
> Fair torch, burn out thy light and lend it not
> To darken her whose light excelleth thine;
> And die, unhallowed thoughts, before you blot,
> With your uncleanness, that which is divine;
> Offer pure incense to so pure a shrine.
> Let fair humanity abhor the deed
> That spots and stains love's modest snow-white weed."
> —SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER XX

FURTHER SAFEGUARDS

Be cautious and modest in your actions, especially when alone. Whatever is necessary or useful for health or cleanliness is not sinful. Beware of the danger of sin that proceeds from unnecessary and useless, prolonged actions. Prudent, cautious self-control is wisdom's root. We all carry our virtue in a frail vessel. Chastity is like a tender lily easily crushed to earth by carelessness or boldness.

Dr. S. B. Howe, in a report to the Senate of Massachusetts, February 1848, shows the solitary vice to be a fruitful source of idiocy, insanity and constitutional degeneracy: "There is another vice, a monster so hideous in mien, so disgusting in feature, so beastly and loathesome, that in very shame and cowardice it hides its head by day, and vampire-like sucks the very life blood from its victims by night; and that vice is self-abuse.

"There are among those enumerated in this report some who not long ago were considered young gentlemen and ladies, but who are now moping idiots—idiots of the lowest kind—lost to all reason, to all moral sense, to all shame—idiots who have but one wish, one passion, and that is further indulgence in the habit—which has already wasted, and as it were dissolved, the fibrous part of their bodies, and utterly extinguished their minds.

"They have sunk down into the abyss toward which thousands are tending—a knowledge of the extent to which this vice prevails would astonish and shock many. It is indeed a pestilence which walketh in darkness, because while it saps and weakens all the higher qualities of the mind, it so *strengthens low cunning and deceit,* that the victim goes on unsuspected, until he is arrested by someone whose practiced eye reads his sin in the very means which he takes to conceal it, or until all sense of shame is forever lost in the night of idiocy, with which his day so early closes. (He hides it from mother and father and sometimes from the priest.) For one victim which it leads down to the depths of idiocy, there are hundreds whom it makes *shame-faced, languid, irresolute, and inefficient* for any high purpose in life.

"It behooves every parent, especially those whose children (of either sex) are obliged to board and sleep with other children, whether in boarding schools, boarding houses, or elsewhere, to have a constant and watchful eye over them, with a view to this insidious and pernicious habit.

"Nothing is more false than the common doctrine of delicacy and reserve in the treatment of this habit. All hints, all indirect advice, all attempts to *cure* it by creating diversions will generally do nothing but increase the cunning by which it is concealed. The way is to throw aside all reserve; to charge the offence directly home; to show up its disgusting nature and hideous consequences in glowing colors; to apply the cautery seething hot, and press it to the very quick, unsparingly and unceasingly.

"There need be no fear of weakening virtue by letting it look upon such hideous deformity as this vice presents. Virtue is not salt or sugar to be softened by such exposure; but the crystal or diamond that repels all foulness from its surface. Acquaintance with such a vice, as is gained by having it held up before the eyes in all its ugliness . . . can only serve to make it detested and avoided. . . . Experience has shown that, in ninety-nine cases in a hundred, the existence of this vice was known to the young, but *not known in its true deformity;* and that in the hundredth, the repulsive character in which it was first presented, made it certain that no further acquaintance with it would be sought. It is generally engendered by too intimate association of persons of the same sex; it is handed from one to another, like contagion; and those who are not exposed to the contagion are not likely to contract the dreadful habit. Hence not only propriety and decency, but also motives of prudence, require us to train up all children to habits of modesty and reserve." Public and private school teachers should have an eye on places where the older and younger children congregate in small groups. Dr. Hollick adds to Dr. Howe's remarks: "These remarks apply to some of the public schools, in most of which this vice prevails to an alarming extent, and sometimes in the most open manner. I have been amazed at the revelation made to me on this subject both by teachers and by pupils, and clearly enough has it been proved that *shunning the subject leads directly to the production and continuance of the vice.* Dr. Howe advises that children as they approach adolescence should not be permitted to sleep together but every one should have a bed of his own (if poverty does not prevent). Boys (and girls too) should be taught to shrink sensitively from any unnecessary exposure of person before each other; they should be trained to habits of delicacy, self-respect and refinement to the utmost, which are powerful helps to virtue. Dr. Hollick adds: ''And since it is almost impossible in the present state of society to prevent children from being taught this vice, it is therefore necessary to *guard them by timely information and warning.* Even if he be kept from vicious companions, the child may learn the habit himself, and may sink and die from it while the parent is glorifying himself on the success of his precautions.''

Evil Companions: Familiarities

Parents and teachers should see to it, therefore, that their children avoid special friendships and undue familiarities. Familiarity between two boys or between two girls, or between a boy and girl, constitutes a moral danger.

Here caution is directed to inter-sexual companionships between boys and girls of high school age. Before resorting to ridicule or punishment, both of which may be necessary, parents and teachers should inculcate into the growing boy respect and chivalry toward the fair sex. This may be done directly by general precept or indirectly in connection with a literary reading or on the occasion of a particular boy's praiseworthy conduct in emergency. It may be done at work or play, at school or at home, whenever opportunity presents. A boy's instinct of fatherly protection or brotherly consideration might be invoked when occasion requires to point a lesson of chivalry and respect for womankind.

In a similar way high school girls should be made aware that their dress, their words, their conduct have an influence on others, especially on their boy acquaintances. Tender words, familiar acts of endearment, suggestive attire, secret engagements, must be tabooed. Sentimental conduct paves the way to illicit friendships. When girls indulge in kissing and petting and necking and other licentious liberties they are sowing the seed of misery and unhappiness. Even for the self-controlled girl who has no base intentions and imagines she can control herself before the worst comes to the worst, frequent intimacies involve an emotional strain which saps the vital energies of the nerves, the mind and the body. It often renders its victims, whether girl or boy, incapable of real affection in later life. If young women are to demand clean living from their male companions they must learn to treat men in a frank and friendly way as comrades and to help them maintain high standards instead of trying to win their admiration by purely physical appeals. Girls trained to reserve in the presence of boys will exercise the higher appeal, the aesthetic, and above all, the moral appeal, which goes a great way in obtaining a gentleman for life's companionship.

A good girl will never trust a stranger for the insignificant pleasure of an auto ride. O child of grace, beware of him who would steal your honor and rob your good name. Beware of the sleek flatterer who is studied in the arts of hell, in wickedness refined.

> "Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
> A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
> That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
> Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
> Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling smooth!
> Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
> Is there no pity, no relenting ruth?"
> —"Cotter's Saturday Night."

By listening to the flatterer and the giver of gifts, many girls betray their own souls, themselves trampling under foot the lily of purity.

The young man who holds his honor cheap by failing to control himself in the presence of women, or what is worse, seeks the dens of vice, should read and reread the *Book of Proverbs.* The seventh chapter tells him by way of advice and caution: "My son, . . . keep my law as the apple of thy eye. Bind it upon thy fingers and write it upon the tables of thy heart. Say to wisdom, Thou art my sister, and call prudence thy friend, that she may keep thee from the woman that is not thine and from the stranger who sweeteneth her words. . . . Let not thy mind be drawn away in her ways, neither be thou deceived with her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded, and the strongest have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, leading even to the inner chambers of death." In the fifth chapter we read: "Her throat is smoother than oil, but her end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down into death, and her steps go in as far as hell." "The woman catcheth the precious soul of a man" (Prov. 6. 26).

Places of Pleasure

Christian gentlemen, do not go habitually with girls at night to public places, whether to the movies, parks or dance pavilions. If at all, go seldom and with great circumspection. Christian ladies, if you must dance, prepare your soul beforehand by prayer and a good intention. Decent attire must precede and accompany you at the dance. Never degrade yourself by parading your semi-nakedness before your own brothers and friends who must feel ashamed of you. A good intention is a safeguard if:

(a) The dance itself is decent and proper;
(b) Your partner is honorable and respectful;
(c) The place is well-lighted and well chaperoned and free from intoxicating liquor. Never drink in the presence of men. Wicked, devilish men might use you as tools of their lower desires, to degrade your womanhood and rob your virtue. Furthermore
(d) Abstain from cool drinks when heated.
(e) Do not go out suddenly after the dance into the cold air.
(f) Take moral caution after the dance.

Return home, neither alone by yourself, nor alone with your friend, much less with a stranger in an automobile. Do not stop on the way home under any pretence whatever, nor allow the driver to take unknown roads or lanes away from the public highway.

Observe these cautions and God will bless you with innocence here and happiness hereafter.

COURTSHIP

Courtship is for intended marriage, not pleasure and pastime.

Courtship must be a serious search for a companion in life by a person of marriageable age, not a girl of sixteen, or a boy of nineteen. Twenty and twenty-four is young enough in our day. Girls and boys in their teens must wait until they get good sense and balanced judgment. Youth easily succumbs in the moment of temptation.

Avoid being alone with your friend. The devil laughs to your destruction.

Avoid courtships of one year and over. A half year or three-fourths of a year is enough to find out your fitness for each other. Extended courtships are only too often a fruitful source of vice and misery. Familiarity breeds contempt.

During courtship, there is no greater asset than self-respect, no greater liability than self-indulgence. It is a hard and undeniable fact that many, if not most, of the divorces, infidelities and broken homes trace their sad origin to lack of respect for the other sex, licentious liberties, unwarranted sensual conduct before marriage. Giddy and silly girls, merely for sentimental reasons, allow wholesale petting and kissing, only to be disillusioned into baser desires and utter abandon.

In a triduum held at Denver, the following resolutions were suggested to the Young Ladies. The same might be applied to young men:

> "1st—My conduct at all times will be such as to command the respect, the esteem, the admiration rather than the affection of men. I shall endeavor to attract by the charm of my personality rather than by the lure of my person.
>
> "2nd—I will die a maiden, rather than marry a man whose conduct and whose religion does not command my respect.
>
> "3rd—I will rebuke any man who dares to use the slightest suggestive expression in my presence.
>
> "4th—I will introduce my every companion to the other members of my family."

PART FOUR

SUPERNATURAL RELATIONS

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of.

. . . .

What are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer."
—TENNYSON, "Morte d'Arthur."

CHAPTER XXI

PRAYER, THE BREATH OF THE SOUL

"Prayer is the simplest form of speech,
That infant lips can try.
Prayer is the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on High."
—MONTGOMERY.

Prayer is man's simplest and grandest occupation here on earth and hereafter in heaven. Here it is the beginning of all that is good, there the culmination of bliss. Prayer is the raising of our minds and hearts to God. It is simple. It does not require learning, or riches, or eloquence, nor does it presuppose any particular feeling of devotion or spiritual fervor, much less sensible consolation, which many saints experienced with great delight and profit. All such delights and sweetnesses are only secondary accompaniments of prayer, not essential features. They do not depend on man but on God's benevolence, for which the receiver should be especially grateful. What counts for us ordinarily is the mind's attention and the will's devotion.

In order to pray well we need know only God and ourselves, how immeasurable His power and goodness, how deep our misery and wretchedness. A childlike attitude towards God, a few sincere thoughts and ardent desires suffice. Our very need teaches us to pray. Like children nestling on the lap of the eternal Father, we pour out our heartaches and our longings. Formality spoils prayer; simplicity and sincerity aid it. If we but tell God what is in our heart we pray well. Every thought finds its way to God. St. Ambrose describes prayer as the wing upon which our soul flies to heaven. When man prays he unleashes the carrier pigeon to take his message of obedience and homage to God, and to return laden with heaven's choicest gifts. Prayer, especially the Our

Father, is faith breathed into human words, hope winging its flight to heaven, love piercing the heart of God.

Our Lord urges us to pray without ceasing. Many saints, after a day's toil, have spent the night thinking of God and speaking with him. Prayer satisfies our deepest cravings for sympathetic companionship with God, into whose presence it ushers us, whose calm, soothing influence it sheds about us, whose steady and strong hand it extends to us.

How Excellent

Our thoughts and desires are the images of our soul. The more exalted they are, the more noble is our soul. If these are limited to the things we see and hear and feel, our soul does not attain to its true nobility. If we think of God, of our supernatural destiny, and yearn for the things of God, our soul becomes God-like; it shares, as it were, in His greatness. Only angels and men can think of God, and to think rightly of Him is the highest thought possible to a created being. Thought cannot rise higher than the Highest. It is prayer when man raises his mind and heart to God and communes with Him. The union of mind and heart with God in prayer is inferior only to sacramental and beatific union. To be completely satisfactory prayer presupposes sanctifying grace and faith. Prayer is inseparably connected with all the sacraments received by an adult; it forms an essential part of our highest and noblest actions.

How Powerful

Sister Teresa of Lisieux says that the scientist Archimedes asked for a fulcrum and a lever and promised to move the earth; but what the scientist could not obtain, the Saints did obtain in prayer. The Almighty has given them a *fulcrum* to lean upon, *Himself*. He has given them also a *lever, prayer*. Thus the Saints uplifted themselves and the world about them. No wonder that "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees" (Cowper). Prayer is a spiritual well, whence we draw the refreshing waters of God's mercy and forgiveness. It is a gold mine enriching the persevering digger with the ore of God's love and grace.

Prayer moves the hand which rules the world. Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance but taking hold of God's willingness to help us. Since prayer is so powerful and God so willing to aid His children, is it not sheer folly to be indifferent and neglectful in our daily orisons?

How Difficult?

Prayer is sometimes difficult, often wearisome and tedious, because we lack the spiritual training and the divine manner of life. In itself prayer is easy. What then makes it hard? The ordinary man is not only *in* the world but also *of* the world. He is earth-bound. Because the body overshadows the soul, the sensual dominates the spiritual, prayer is hard and tiresome for some men at all times and for all men sometimes.

To overcome this earthly-mindedness and sensualism we must exercise ourselves more than we have done in the spiritual life. Practice makes perfect. We learn to read by reading, to spell by spelling. We learn to pray by praying. We keep our heart detached from the world by having the mind occupied with God.

God always welcomes us. His is a standing invitation. "Come to me all ye that labor and are heavily laden and I will refresh you." He throws open the flood gates of divine mercy and compassion. He opens His heart to receive us: His arms are extended to embrace us. Listen to what He says: "Come whenever you wish, pray for all you desire; what is mine shall be yours, if it be for your good." Seeing us kneel contrite and grateful at His feet, how glad is the Lord of Heaven and earth! Like a kind father, he peers into our eyes, strained with grief, and accepts our repentance. Extending His hand when danger threatens, He bids us take heart anew. In prayer, as in Holy Communion, He gives us a foretaste of the beatific vision and beatific love. His home becomes our mansion and our hearts His home.

Why Pray?

God is the Master whom we adore, the Benefactor to whom we feel grateful, the Preserver to whom we address all our needs, the Pardoner ever ready to accept our repentance. In so far as He is our first beginning and last end, our source and our destiny, we owe Him absolute homage. Adoration is the highest worship given only to the All-highest. The creature acknowledges the Creator, the child its Father, the servant its Master. In adoration we acknowledge God's supreme dominion, we admit our utter dependence.

If mute nature, in the beauty of her sun-kissed lakes and meadows; in the grandeur of her snow-capped mountains touching the skies; in the strength of her canyons; in the power of her roaring oceans that stretch from continent to continent; offers continuous praise to the Creator, shall man remain inarticulate? The poet Coleridge in his "Hymn Before Sunrise" beautifully interprets nature's tribute to her God:

"Motionless torrents! Silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who with living flowers
Of loveliest hue, spread garlands at your feet? . . .
God! Let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice plains echo, God!"

If nature with her thousand voices praises God, shall man, the Crown of Creation, endowed with understanding and free will, refuse to glorify his Lord and Master? Speaking by the pen of Malachias, God declares: "The son honoreth the father and the servant his master: if then I be a Father, where is my honor; and if I be a Master, where is my fear?" (Mal. 1. 6). Even in affliction, Job found heart to bless the name of the Lord. David the royal harpist found supreme joy in singing God's praises:

"Praise the Lord ye children, praise ye the name of the Lord:
Blessed be the name of the Lord from henceforth now and forever.
From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same,
The name of the Lord is worthy of praise."
Psalm 112. 1–3.

The three young men in the fiery furnace with one accord glorified God, saying: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers: and worthy to be praised, and glorified, and exalted above all forever. . . . Blessed art

Thou in the holy temple of thy glory . . . on the throne of thy kingdom . . . in the firmament of heaven. . . . All ye works of God bless the Lord; praise and exalt him above all forever'' (Daniel 3. 52 ff.). Nabuchodonosor, seeing the young men emerge unsinged from the heated furnace, said: ''Blessed be the God of them, to wit, of Sidrach, Misach and Abdenago, who hath sent his angel and delivered his servants that believe in him. . . . By me therefore this decree is made that every people, tribe and tongue, which shall speak blasphemy against the God of Sidrach, Misach and Abdenago shall be destroyed and their houses laid waste: for there is no other God that can save in this manner. . . . The most high God hath wrought signs and wonders towards me. It hath seemed good to me therefore to publish His signs, because they are great, and His wonders, because they are mighty; and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His power extends to all generations'' (Dan. 3. 95–100).

By adoration we imitate the Cherubim and Seraphim before God's throne who spend their eternity hymning songs of praise—Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts. ''Amen. Benediction and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, honor and power and strength to our God forever'' (Apoc. 7. 12). ''He that adoreth God with joy shall be accepted, and his prayer shall approach, even to the clouds'' (Ecclus. 35. 20).

God is man's supreme benefactor. He must demand our gratitude. Blessed is the man who gives with a cheerful soul, thrice blessed who receives with a grateful heart. Gratitude is the fairest blossom that grows on the tree of humility. Its fruits are sincerity, peace and joy. St. Teresa, as well as many other divinely illumined mystics, after a grateful reception of God into her soul, was exalted in ecstasy to heaven, where she experienced a foretaste of future bliss. There is no more pleasing exercise of the mind and heart than gratitude, which apart from its divine reward, enjoys an abundance of inward satisfaction and contentment, from which the selfish and ungrateful are barred. Gratitude has been termed the fertile soil where joy thrives and peace abounds.

As members of society, as children of one vast family, our head is God. ''Call none your father upon earth, for one is your Father who is in heaven'' (Matt. 23. 9). As a father feeds, clothes and cares for his children, God has fed our bodies and nurtured our souls; clothed us with raiment better than wealth can buy, the garment of sanctifying grace; cared for us far more than any earthly parent could provide. To our last breath we should remain God's humble and grateful debtors. Were we not made members of the true Church, fellow citizens with the saints and domestics of God? Did not God, seeing mankind fainting in the desert, plant the seven refreshing oases, on the various milestones of life, the seven divine sacraments! How can the manna in the desert and the water from the rock compare with the living bread that cometh from heaven to give life and strength and immortality to struggling mankind? What are the synagogue and the temple compared with the true Church, the pillar and ground of truth, the interpreter and guide in faith and morals! Like the exiled Jews who longed to behold again the ancient beauties of the temple and to feel the comforts of home, we Christians, languishing in darkness and misery, never forget that God is our Father and the Church our Mother. "Let my right hand be forgotten, let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee" (Ps. 136. 5, 6).

In life's bitter exile we have not been orphaned. Jesus remains with us our Companion and Brother in the Holy Sacrament, to strengthen us when we falter, to heal us when we bleed, to be our solace in sorrow and our final conductor from death to life eternal.

Thou hast given us all things, O Lord, give us one thing more, a grateful heart! Impart to us a deep appreciation of the Holy Sacrament and the August Sacrifice, wherein Thou hast summarized all Thy benefits, bequeathing to mankind a memorial of all Thy works. Forgetting our paltry services, may we ever be mindful of Thy generosity.

God is our Preserver. He sustains our life, He upholds our natural powers, He assists us in every act whether spontaneous or free. Without His assistance we would immediately fall back into nothingness. Hence we owe God, and God must demand from us, the prayer of petition. There are many men in the world today who boast of their independence from God, who call religion superstition and prayer the folly of the simple-minded. What can equal God's patience with such benighted souls? His mercy will one day cease. These prayerless wretches cut off the very rope of safety and frequently fall into the abyss of despair. God is not mocked, we reap as we sow; if we sow in the flesh, we reap corruption; if the planting be in the spirit, the harvest shall be life everlasting. Supplication helps us, weak and sickly infants of God, to remain on the divine breast and to cling tight to the strong right arm of God. Every morning we ought to ask for guidance and blessing. Every evening we should beg protection. Neglecting to set apart a brief yet sacred period every morning and evening, because in our materialistic age we find little time or inclination to pray, our souls will shrivel, and despite our noblest endeavors, life will remain barren. If we ignore God, He will more and more abandon us to our vices.

God is the propitiation for our sins. When we were miserable and helpless as sheep fallen into the pit, the Son of God came to our rescue, to redeem and heal us. God enshrined Himself in human flesh and blood which He offered on the Altar of the Cross. He died that we might live. He made His last will and testament, that all men might become His adopted children and heirs. In the sacrament of Penance, God remains the Good Shepherd of all men until the end of time, always eager to uplift the fallen and to heal the wounded; yet there are millions who fail to seek forgiveness, who even ignore God's call to repentance. They live on, carefree as the birds, selfish and lustful as the beasts of the field, seeking only pleasure. To have fallen from the pedestal of grace might have been weakness; but to remain in the mire is utter folly.

"When on life we're tempest driven,
And conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fixed with heaven
Is sure a noble anchor."
—Burns.

How Necessary!

Prayer is not only a privilege but even a duty. When God thundered forth from Mount Sinai: I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have strange gods before me, He commanded us to believe, to hope, to love, to sacrifice, and pray, as without prayer faith, hope and love are impossible. Without prayer sacrifice is empty ritual. Prayer is the soul of religious exercises. As faith is dead without love, so religion must die without prayer.

There has never been a race or nation without religion, or a religion without prayer. Jesus taught us to pray without ceasing. No matter how tired He was after a hard day's work, He frequently spent the night in prayer. All the important phases of the Savior's life were prefaced with prayer.

God has implanted in man the very instinct of prayer, especially in time of need or calamity. God commanded all to pray because all need Him, He needs none. Every good thing, natural and supernatural, physical and spiritual, comes from the Father of lights. In Him we live and move and have our being. What wholesome food is for the stomach, fresh air for the lungs, rest and sleep for the mind and nerves, that prayer is to man's spirit.

"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air,
His watchword at the gates of Death,
He enters heaven by prayer."
—MONTGOMERY.

God helps us to pray because He is our Father and knows our needs. He demands that *we realize our need of Him.* Theologians, consulting Holy Scripture, tradition and reason, are unanimous in teaching that prayer, for all having attained the age and use of reason, is an ordinary means of salvation, without which man cannot be saved. It is as *necessary for all* as *penance is for those in the toils of mortal sin.* In fact, the virtue of penance or the act of contrition is a prayer. The sacrament of penance cannot be received without prayer. Sometimes, that is in case of necessity, perfect contrition, based on the love of God for His sake, serves as an effective substitute for sacramental confession; sometimes the baptism of desire, or the good will to serve God as best one knows, acts as a substitute for the baptism of water; but there can be no substitute for prayer. All men *can,* and, if they desire to save their soul, *must* pray. Humble and earnest prayer ingratiates us with God, the giver of every good gift. Prayer was President Lincoln's spiritual source of greatness. He says: "Many times have I been drawn to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day." When elected president he remarked: "Without God's guidance and help I cannot succeed. With His help I cannot fail." When he received the news of Grant's victory and Lee's surrender, he humbly bade his cabinet to thank God. The most touching incident in George Washington's life is said to have taken place when he was on his knees at Valley Forge, praying for his starved and frozen soldiers.

Not only religious men pray and thereby prove that prayer is a demand of the mind and heart, but even the irreligious man, by his action in solemn moments, proves it. When gaunt need stares him in the face, when calamity hangs by a thread over his head, when grim death makes his inexorable call, then does he feel the need of prayer. Fear is not the cause, but the providential occasion, of his coming to himself and realizing his absolute dependence on God. Voltaire, the prince of atheists, whose meat and drink was to hate God and revile the Church, who in life write and acted as though he were doing God a favor by denying His existence and waging war on all that is good and holy, even he was forced, by his natural instinct, to pray. When the supreme moment of death was fast approaching, he could no longer deceive himself. Proud as he was, he was compelled to acknowledge his need of God. But, alas, when he begged his boon companions to allow the priest to enter his room, they mocked and derided the disillusioned wretch, refusing him the consoling prayers of the priest and the divine strength of the sacraments. Voltaire's only hope lay in prayer for true conversion and in perfect contrition. He died with the devil's prayer on his lips, the prayer to which he was accustomed in life, that of cursing man and of blaspheming God. Voltaire, as every man, needed God. God had no need of him. (Segur-Mueller, in "Antworten Auf die Einwuerfe gegen die Religion," pp. 55, 56, mentions Voltaire's desire to have a priest as a fact attested by an eyewitness, Voltaire's physician.)

In April, 1912, the *Titanic,* the vaunted pride of human ingenuity, was sailing peacefully across the Atlantic. The liner suddenly crashed into a huge iceberg. The ''invulnerable'' was wounded to death and soon began to sink. Then it was that Earth ceased to attract the merrymakers and Heaven inculcated the necessity of prayer. Men, women and children, some of whom had not been accustomed to pray, got down on their knees to beg God's mercy. At such moments man acts in accordance with his nature. He does the right thing. He prays, as a creature, to his Creator.

CHAPTER XXII

HOW AND WHEN TO PRAY

In the first, fourth, and fifth chapters of St. James, we are told how to pray: ''If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all men abundantly, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried by the wind. . . . Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights'' (Jas. 1. 5, 6, 17). ''Is any of you sad? Let him pray. . . . Pray one for another, that you may be saved. For the continual prayer of a just man availeth much. Elias was a man passible (subject to suffering) like unto us: and with prayer he prayed that it might not rain upon the earth, and it rained not for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit'' (Jas. 5. 13, 16, 17, 18). ''Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow. Be humbled in the sight of the Lord and He will exalt you. . . . God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble'' (Jas. 4. 8, 9, 10, 6). In these beautiful, inspired words we learn that we must ask with firm faith and unshaken trust, with simple, honest hearts, with pure hands, with sorrow for our sins, and with self-annihilation. We should pray for one another in order to be saved from eternal perdition. He also tells us to pray for wisdom, that is, a relish for the things of God.

> "Bubbles we may buy with a whole soul's tasking!
> 'Tis heaven alone that is given away.
> 'Tis only God may be had for the asking."

In subordination to our eternal welfare we may also pray for temporal goods and blessings. Like Elias, we may and should pray for rain or similar temporal necessities. We must not be satisfied with mere lip service, but our hearts must draw nigh to God. Otherwise we deserve Christ's rebuke to the Pharisees: ''This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.''

Jesus assured us that the humble and contrite publican went home justified in the sight of God, whereas the proud, insincere Pharisee did not. Trying to elate, he only lowered himself. He who exalts himself shall be humbled, whereas he who humbles himself shall be exalted. Because he lacked faith in God, he placed all trust in himself. He did not cleanse his hands and purify his heart and draw nigh unto God because of pride. He failed to realize that

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of the eye
When only God is near."
—MONTGOMERY.

Christ Himself tells us to pray in His Name. ''Amen, amen I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My Name He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My Name. Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full'' (John 16. 23–24). Holy Mother Church addresses most of her prayers to the Son and invariably concludes all of them: ''Through Jesus Christ our Lord.''

Attention of the mind and devotion of the will are also required. We must prepare our mind beforehand, and during prayer guard the senses so as to keep the mind directed to God. ''Before prayer prepare thy soul: and be not as a man that tempteth God'' (Ecclus. 18. 23). As the violinist first tunes his instrument, so we must attune our minds and hearts to God by banishing all wordly cares and interests, and fixing our mind on the divine presence. Abraham left his servants and his beast of burden below the mountain, before ascending for sacrifice and prayer. St. Bernard, before entering the house of God, was wont to bid the spiritual beasts of burden, namely, all sinful, vain, worldly considerations to remain outside. Christ drove out of the temple those who robbed

God of His honor. Even so must we drive out of our minds and hearts all such thoughts as might steal our hearts from earnest and intimate converse with God. A reverent posture and humble attitude of mind and body are procured by kneeling, folding the hands, and, if possible, repairing to the house of God.

We must likewise persevere in prayer. The apostles persevered with one mind in prayer (Acts. 1. 14). The early converts to Christianity persevered not only in the doctrine of the apostles and in the holy sacraments but also in prayer (Acts 2. 42). Christ praised the woman of Canaan not only for her deep humility and lively faith, but also for her perseverance, which He, in His wisdom, had put to the test (Matt. 15. 22 ff). Jesus relates the parable of the importunate, unyielding friend who continued his midnight request for three loaves to set before his guest. The importuned man got out of bed not because of friendship but on account of his friend's insistence. Even so God is pleased when we batter the gates of heaven with the storms of persevering prayer (Luke 11. 5–8). The Jews in Bethulia prayed all night for deliverance from Holofernes besieging their city. Although the situation grew more desperate and, humanly speaking, hopeless, they held out, hoping in God, Who sent them a deliverer in Judith. (See Judith, Chap. 4–13). St. Francis de Sales remarks: "We have to wait a whole year before the seed we sow bears fruit. Are we not more impatient in regard to the fruit of our prayers?" How many a fond mother, with cherished hope in her breast, prays for her erring son or daughter to return to God. Monica's petition for her son Augustine's conversion was richly rewarded after eighteen years of patient and persevering prayer. St. Gregory says: "God wishes to be asked, to be forced, to be overcome by a certain importunity; therefore it is said: The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." Ophelia Browning voices the scriptural assurance that God will hear those who keep up their faith and hope in Him. The poem concludes:

"God will finish what He has begun,
If you keep the incense burning there;
His glory you shall see, sometime, somewhere.

. . . .

Unanswered yet? Faith cannot be unanswered;
Her feet are firmly planted on the rock,
Amid the wildest storms she stands undaunted,
Nor quails before the loudest thunder shock,
She knows omnipotence hath heard her prayer,
And cries, "It shall be done, sometime, somewhere."
—"More Heart Throbs," p. 359.

Finally our request must be coupled with resignation to God's holy will. We must leave the granting of our petition entirely to God's pleasure. Herein Christ Jesus gave an example for our admiration and imitation. In spite of seeing the huge storm of sin come down upon His frail shoulders, He looks up to Heaven and in the bitterness of His spirit He groans: "Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: but yet not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22. 42). God will grant our request provided it be for His honor and glory, and the welfare of our soul. Shall a sick man prescribe his own medicine? Shall a child be given what is harmful to it? A certain mother demanded of God the recovery of her sick boy. She refused to be resigned. She told the priest: "God must grant me my desire." The child was restored to health but, alas, what a curse! His growing wickedness brought him to the gallows. When in ignorance of ourselves and our needs, we sometimes pray for what would be to our harm, God's mercy withholds it, lest we be ruined at our request.

"We, ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the Wise Powers
Deny us for our good; so we find profit
By losing of our prayers."
—SHAKSPEARE.

Life is one unmitigated struggle between good and evil, joy and sadness, pleasure and pain. Where peace and harmony should reign, there is often strife and discord. Hence the greater need for looking beyond ourselves and our surroundings into a higher, purer, more peaceful atmosphere. "Trouble and perplexity lead to prayer, but prayer drives away trouble and perplexity." The many suicides, those human wrecks scattered on the sands of time, could not weather the rough billows, because they lacked spiritual balance and resignation. On the other hand the great confessors and virgins who dedicated themselves to God were often troubled in body and spirit almost beyond endurance. It was resignation to God's holy will that enabled them to "Suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, the whips and scorns of time, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely."

Not God but man himself, by wilful sin, has deluged the world with evil. Redemption from this sad state is to be had, after the redeeming Blood of Christ, by resignation to life's allotted woes. The oak will break because it does not bend to the will of the storm. Even so man must break unless he bow in resignation to the divine will. Daily we pray that God's will be done on earth as it is by the angels and saints in heaven. In proportion as we work and pray to do God's will on earth, shall we enjoy His love in heaven.

"His will is in the law of the Lord
and on His law he shall meditate day
and night. And he shall be like a tree
which is planted near the running waters,
which shall bring forth its fruit in due
season. And his leaf shall not fall off:
and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper."
—Psalm 1. 1–3.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE INTERIOR LIFE

"I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2. 20).

We must flee into Egypt. The only way to flee from the world of sin and live with Christ is the hidden and mortified life. We must live in this world as if our spirit were in heaven and our body in the tomb. It is a death according to nature, but a life according to grace. As Samson drew the honeycomb from the mouth of the lion he had slain, Christ has drawn life from death and bids us, in a similar way, to seek spiritual life from the mortification of the flesh (Judges 14. 8).

He who most mortifies his natural inclinations, likewise attracts the greatest abundance of supernatural inspirations. Interior and exterior mortification draw down upon us the favors of heaven. As the heavenly manna in the desert was not given until the Israelites had consumed all the bread and flour brought out of Egypt, so also divine gifts are seldom granted to those who adhere to worldly inclinations.

Mortification, therefore, is a necessary condition for the inner life. Prayer without mortification is like a soul without a body. Mary and Martha had to unite their services. Prayer and mortification go hand in hand. St. Francis de Sales compared these two elements of the spiritual life to the two scales of a balance. When one rises, the other sinks. They must balance. To raise the mind by prayer, it is necessary to keep the body down by mortification; or the flesh will weigh down the spirit and hinder it from rising.

The flower of virtue thrives only amidst the thorns of mortification. The thorny stem defends the flower against the ravages of men and beasts; self-denial protects the spiritual life against the heat of passion, the frost of indifference, the drouth of worldliness.

We ascend the mountain of prayer only by the hill of mortification. Incense must be burnt, before its fragrance rises heavenward. Prayer too cannot arise fragrant with divine sweetness, to pierce the clouds and reach the heart of God, unless it ascends from the altar of sacrifice. Christ, the supreme holocaust, was likewise the high priest of prayer. When we are dead to ourselves we live to God, for then He feeds us with the manna of inspiration and grace.

By interior recollection we retire from the turmoil of the world and the tumult of the passions into the quiet inner court of God's presence. "Blessed is the man that shall continue in wisdom and that shall meditate in His justice, and in his mind shall think of the all-seeing eye of God" (Ecclus. 14. 25). The farther removed we are from the haunts of men, the nearer we approach the Divine Presence. By sin we flee the face of God, by meditation we invite Him as the first Guest of the soul. We sit down to eat and drink, as it were, with our heavenly host. We exchange glances and greetings. Reflections are short but ardent leaps toward God; the more vehement, the better; the more direct and brief, the more efficacious. St. Bruno, pondering the various phases of divine beneficence and the ways best to imitate God's kindness, would repeat: "O divine Goodness, O divine Love." St. Francis of Assisi: "My God and my all!" St. Augustine would dwell on these trenchant recollections: "To love! To die to self! To attain to God!"

Considerations are but the prelude to holy affections and desires. These, in turn, stimulate noble aspirations and good resolutions. The mind weighs the great advantages of humility, the will loves, desires, embraces it. Pious reflections on humility serve the purpose of an antitoxin which expels the poison of pride. Then love, desire, aspiration, resolve, like healing medicines, are poured into the wound, to build up new tissue and restore spiritual health and vigor. Or we might say, consideration is the needle, introducing into the warp and woof of our lives the thread of love, desire, aspiration, all of which are tied and held firmly in their place by the knot of a good resolve. Recollection and aspiration go hand in hand. By their aid we live and act in God and God lives and acts in us.

There are persons who become discouraged in mental prayer and even discontinue it, because they fear incurring increased guilt on account of the unkept resolutions made during prayer. St. Francis de Sales considered this a stratagem of the devil to delude the incautious and deter the fainthearted. We should never leave the exercise of prayer except to do important work; and even then ought we to repair the loss by frequent aspirations and resolutions, the special fruit of meditation. After planting an orchard, the horticulturist must wait for years before he can pick the fruit of his toil. Good resolutions do not, like mushrooms, grow over night. Slowly, imperceptibly like fruit trees they assume proper shape and form. They take root, grow their trunks, spread their leaves, blossom forth and finally bear fruit. Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character.

We may for a time fail to execute our good resolutions, we may give in and draw back and waver, and like the growing tree, even fall a prey to the storms and the insects, but eventually we shall rise again, grow strong and prosper, provided we sustain courage. The habit of courage and good will forms a certain heroic background, an ideal atmosphere, without which no one can persevere. For this reason the courageous plodder often succeeds where sporadic genius fails. The heroism involved in keeping up courage and good will in all circumstances, no matter how disconcerting at times, is always a source of consolation to ourselves, of inspiration and edification to others, and above all, a source of pleasure to God who sees pure intentions and rewards good will.

Never lose heart at prayer. Each morning renew your courage for the day and begin life over again. How beneficial upon awaking in the morning, to stroll into your own spiritual garden, to drive out the sparrows of discouragement and invite the bluebirds of good cheer. Say to yesterday's disquieting fears: "Get ye away from hence to the mountain, ye impertinent sparrows." And to your own soul: "Why art thou cast down? . . . Hope thou in God" (Ps. 41. 12).

In our mental prayer we should not roam from one thing to another, like drones making noise, without gathering honey. Unity and simplicity in all things, but especially in spiritual exercises. When we allow our mind to think of many spiritual thoughts and make many resolutions we are apt to think only of the fragrance and forget the nectar. It is best to return often to the same reflections and the same resolutions, to impress them more deeply on the canvas of our souls, like painters who repeat the strokes of the pencil until the canvas is finished. The swimmer who throws his hands and feet wildly in all directions drowns. So in the spiritual sea of life. If we are too eager and hasty in consuming many books, saying many prayers, making many resolutions, we run great danger of dissipating our energies and eventually succumbing to confusion. For the wise man says: "The corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things" (Wisd. 9. 15).

While praying, we should forget ourselves and our imperfections, ignore all distractions and think only of God. St. Anthony tells us we ought even to forget we are praying. Above all we should not try to pray in such or such a manner, as merely to satisfy ourselves that we are praying rightly. Nor should we be satisfied only when we feel spiritual delight and consolation. Our principal aim should be to forget ourselves and to please God.

Children know how to act. Unconcerned about themselves they cling to their mother or father. Love is sufficient to occupy their whole attention. He who is very attentive to his heavenly lover, has neither the time nor the desire to contemplate himself, his mind turns continually towards the object of his love. In simplicity and unity of purpose, we are to imitate the child, whom Jesus held out as a model for all.

St. Francis disapproved of devout souls continually making reflections on their own faults and shortcomings. Why should we, after we have repented and atoned for our failings, continue to dig them up and torture ourselves, only to become unfitted for the big things of life? Making a hundred reflections upon trifling, insignificant matters is a waste of the precious time God has allotted for better and nobler pursuits. Silkworms sometimes imprison and entangle themselves in their own work. So likewise do fainthearted, small-minded, backward-looking, pessimistic persons. The painter has no time to stop at every stroke to inspect his work and judge its merits, but only at intervals. So too whilst some fervent souls are so much occupied to do things well, they run great danger of muddling them.

"O sweet was the truth that was whispered,
That mortals should never despair,
For He who takes care of an insect,
Much more for His children will care.

"As though to our short-sighted vision,
No way of escape may appear;
Let us trust; for when least we expect it,
The help of "Our Father" is near.
"Heart Throbs," p. 297.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE HAND OF GOD

"There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."
—Shakspeare.

Divine Providence is not a pious theory but an outstanding fact. The infidel cannot reasonably doubt it, the sinner cannot escape it, the just man lives by it. Wheresoever we are, the presence of the Almighty surrounds us like the air we breathe, permeates our entire being as the beneficent sun rays penetrate the leaf and flower. As the apple is enclosed in the seed, so our lives are enshrined in the plans of God.

An undeniable fact. When Thomas Paine, admitting a general Providence, tried to refute with subtle arguments the existence of a particular Providence, he submitted his manuscript to Benjamin Franklin, who rebuked him for his folly in attempting to counteract the general conviction of mankind: ''Denying Divine Providence is like spitting against the wind.'' In his farewell to the armies of the United States, George Washington, contemplating the enfeebled condition of the American resources at the time, ascribed the complete success of the war for Independence to the ''singular interpositions of Providence which were such as could scarcely escape the attention of the most unobserving.''

If God feeds the homeless sparrows and clothes the lilies of the field, with how much more tender solicitude will He feed and clothe and care for His diligent and provident children. Having created man, redeemed him, sanctified him and called him by His own name, shall He cease to preserve, govern and direct him on life's difficult way? (Matt. 6. 25 ff.)

In the smallest details God's hand is at work. Browning writes:

"Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled
The heavens, God thought on me His child;
Ordained a life for me, arrayed
Its circumstances, every one
To the minutest; aye, God said
This head this hand shall rest upon
Thus, ere He fashioned star or sun."

Not only a particular fact but also an all-pervading one, embracing all persons, all things, all time, all place, all circumstances.

"Thou art ever present, Power Supreme
Not circumscribed by time, nor fixed to space,
In wealth, in want, in freedom, or in chains,
In dungeons or on thrones, the faithful find thee."

A mysterious fact. St. Paul exclaims: ''O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counseller? Or who hath first given to Him, and recompense shall be made him? For of Him, and by Him, and in Him, are all things'' (Rom. 11. 33 ff). In heaven's scroll what mighty secrets are enrolled? What mortal tongue can narrate Thy mysteries or define Thy counsels? Who can see the threads that extend from obscure proceedings to apparent ends? Providence may not always seem to favor individuals, but the deep wisdom of its counsels extends to the instruction and ennoblement of all. However benevolent may be the intentions of Providence, they do not always advance the immediate and temporal happiness of the individual. Higher ends, often shrouded in mystery at the time, come to light in due season.

"God's ways seem dark, but soon or late
They touch the shining hills of day."

In spite of man's short-sighted and often selfish policies, the inscrutable wisdom above directs and promotes the ultimate welfare of all. Man proposes, God disposes. God's will moves freely through heaven and earth. The just follow it like color follows light, the wicked seek to obscure the light of heaven. The former strive to carry out God's designs, the latter deny and oppose. Nature is their god. Providence mere chance. Free will, as a source of evil, is a stumbling block. Imputing their own sin to necessity, they cry out against God, oppose Him, yea, deny His rule over them. Alexander Pope refutes the cynics of his day and of all time. Addressing the haughty skeptic, he writes:

"All nature is but art unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And 'spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is is right."

We can rest assured that nothing happens except in the sight of God, nothing is done except by the permission of God, nothing takes place except in accordance with the plan of God,

"Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall;
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst and now a world."
—Pope.

Nothing happens except in the sight of God. God is everywhere watching and caring for the creatures He has made. All things are open to His eyes. No creature is invisible in His sight. He is not far from us, like earthly rulers who seldom see their subjects, who frequently ignore and despise their dependents. God is always near and takes an active, personal interest in us, like a kind father, a tender mother, a loving spouse. In Him we live and move and have our being. God upholds all our physical acts and actions. He concurs with us in all that we think and do and say. ''He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment.''

God sees and knows our trials and temptations; our earnest endeavors, no matter how unsuccessful; our good intentions, howsoever frustrated in the grim battle of life. Our struggles, our victories and our failures, all are recorded on high. Job in the midst of unrivaled hardships and privations retains his composure, saying within himself: ''Behold my witness is in heaven and he that knoweth my conscience is on high'' (Job 16. 20). The royal psalmist exclaims: ''Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me. . . . Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life'' (Ps. 22. 4–6). To a confident soul what does it matter that men forget, misunderstand, misinterpret, despise, persecute! Does not God see, weigh, judge? Does He not reward the good, and punish the wicked? Divine Providence tempers His blessings to secure better results. He balances joys with fears that we may neither presume nor despair. Thus God is pleased to make our crosses bearable and our enjoyments wholesome and safe.

God sees the wicked prosper to their own harm. He allows the just to suffer for their own good. For a time the doers of evil may gain the upper hand, to persecute the faithful, but in God's good time they will realize that behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting,
With exactness grinds He all."

Divine Providence does not look idly on, when the wicked gnash their teeth in hatred. God sees and knows their intrigues and treacheries. He weighs their insults and imprecations. With all-seeing eye He beholds their secret abominations. ''Surely thou seest, O son of man, what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every one in private in his chamber: for they say: 'The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth'. . . . Therefore I also will deal with them in my wrath: my eye shall not spare them, neither will I show mercy: and when they shall cry to my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them'' (Ezech. 8. 12, 18). ''Very shortly I will pour out my wrath upon thee, . . . I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will lay upon thee all thy crimes. And my eye shall not spare, neither will I show mercy . . . and you shall know that I am the Lord that strike. . . . Nothing of them shall remain, nor of their people, nor of the noise of them'' (Ezech. 7. 8–11).

Secondly, nothing happens except by God's permission. God is not a mere idle spectator of the events that take place before our eyes. Only in the most extraordinary events do we visibly see or feel God's hand. Though hidden to man's gaze, God's powerful hand is at work. If we look out into the world of human affairs, almost everything seems given over to the caprice of the passions, the sway of physical forces, or even the dumb show of chance. Much of this disorder and confusion is the inheritance of sin. Man abuses his moral freedom. He chooses contrary to his better judgment. "God made man from the beginning and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added His commandments and precepts. . . . He hath set water and fire before thee: stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt. Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him. For the wisdom of God is great and He is strong in power, *seeing all men without ceasing*. The eyes of the Lord are towards them that fear Him, and He knoweth all the work of man; He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, and He hath given no man license to sin: For He desireth not a multitude of faithless and profitless children" (Ecclus. 15. 14–22). Did He not say to the Israelites in the days of Moses: "Consider that I have set before thee this day life and good and, on the other hand, death and evil—I call heaven and earth to witness this day that I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursing. Choose therefore life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deut. 30. 15, 19).

And yet God holds moral sway over the good and evil. Whilst respecting the liberty of man, He *rules* it, *directs* it, and *limits* it according to His good pleasure. Even the wicked, from whom God has not withheld an astonishing power for evil, succeed in doing only what He permits them to do. There is a limit beyond which human malice and criminal excess cannot go, held in check by the moral sway of Divine Providence. We read in the life of St. Mary of Egypt, how having joined, for her own vicious purposes, the pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, she was suddenly confronted by the power of God, forbidding her to enter the church, until she had cleansed her heart of its evil desire. So purged, she entered with changed purpose, made a devout visit to the Savior's relic, kissed it and entered upon a saintly career.

God's moral empire over the human will is shown in a most striking way in the protection and preservation of His Church. For nineteen centuries, with God's assurance to be with her until the end of time, Holy Church has withstood the attacks of her enemies. The ten Pagan persecutions of Rome left the Church in a fast-spreading and vigorous condition. The machinations of Julian the Apostate proved ineffective and futile: ''O Galilean, thou hast conquered'' is said to have been Julian's dying admission. When for several centuries during the so-called Dark Ages, the barbarian hordes like clouds darkened the horizon of Europe and threatened to extinguish the candle of civilization, God protected and preserved the Church, which in turn preserved and protected the arts and sciences of civilization, the faith and morals of Christianity. Divine Providence witnessed the successive victories of the Catholic faith over Arianism, Sabellianism, Macedonianism, Nestorianism, Monophysitism, Monothelitism, the Eastern Schism, the Western Schism, the so-called Reformation with its endless variations. The French Revolution and Freemasonry did their utmost. Socialism and Modernism likewise are going to an untimely grave, the Ku Klux Klan is going the way of the Know-nothings, whilst the age-old Church of Christ lives on, triumphant, because God is with her, protecting and preserving her to the end of time. (See Chapter VI, ''Christ our Teacher.'')

Thirdly, nothing takes place except in fulfillment of the divine economy, the divine plan. Many events, many things seem useless and, to our narrow vision, even harmful. Yet we know God cannot do or permit anything that is utterly useless, or altogether harmful, since such things would prove an obstacle to the ends that He has prescribed. Everything in the world, whether in the material order or in the spiritual, has its end, its usefulness, its reasonable function. Both good and evil tend to serve God's ultimate purpose.

"Evil is only the slave of good;
Sorrow the servant of joy,
The fountain of joy is fed by tears
And love is lit by the breath of sighs;
The deepest griefs and the wildest fears
Have holiest ministries."

God wills physical evil not for its own sake but merely as a means to some ultimate good. Moral evil He forbids and condemns. For a time He tolerates even sin and vice, in order to let man exercise his freedom and ultimately to draw him by devious paths to see and deplore his wrong. Thus God plants repentance and virtue on the ashes of sin. Joseph's brothers committed a great wrong in selling their brother, but we know from the Bible narrative that God used Joseph in Egypt to save his own people and many others from famine. And Joseph himself was rewarded and blessed for all he had unjustly suffered from his envious brothers. God's planning Providence shows that He is infinitely wise and good. Without willing evil, He knows the secret of making it serve to accomplish His good designs. Permitting evil, He subordinates it to our final good.

Realizing, therefore, that the Lord takes care of his own, we shall the more confide in Him. David, choosing the Lord for his inheritance, prayed: "Preserve me, O Lord, for I have put my trust in Thee. . . . Thou art my God. . . . I set the Lord always in my sight: for He is at my right hand, that I be not moved. Therefore my heart hath been glad . . . moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope. . . . Thou hast made known to me the ways of life" (Psalm 15). In the midst of skeptical brethren the apostles renewed their confidence: Lord, if we leave Thee, to whom shall we go? St. Teresa of the Child Jesus abandoned herself like a child entirely to her heavenly Father. As a kind Father, God arranges all for our final good. "To them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints" (Rom. 8. 28). As a shepherd watches over his sheep, protects them from mad dogs and ravening wolves; guides them over rocks, pitfalls and ledges; feeds them with green pastures and bubbling fountains; leads them back home at night to shelter, closes the door against the thieves and wolves; goes out in search of the lost or strayed lambs, binds up the wounded, gathers up the scattered and brings them back safely to the fold; so too does the divine Shepherd watch over, protect, guide, feed, gather together, and heal his human sheep and lambs with tender care.

"The Lord ruleth me," sings the royal Psalmist in the beautiful Shepherd Psalm, ‘‘and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment: He hath converted my soul. He hath led me on the paths of justice for his own name’s sake. For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they have strengthened me. Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me. Thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly it is. And Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life’’ (Psalm 22).

Christ slept whilst the boat rocked and tossed on a stormy sea. The timid disciples rush towards the master, crying: ‘‘Lord, save us: we perish.’’ Jesus rises, stands aloft over the raging billows and with a wave of His hand quiets the storm and puts at ease the apostles’ trembling hearts. How often have we not merited His rebuke: ‘‘Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?’’ Parents often forget that God who sends them children will also help to clothe and feed them. Young people who unduly postpone marriage because of financial reasons often sin against Divine Providence. With more trust in God they could see their way clear to earlier, happier and more virtuous marriages. So too the sick and disconsolate, with a greater trust in Divine Providence, would often experience that their sickness and trials are not unto death but to show forth the glory of God and vindicate His ways to man. Whittier writes:

“I know not what the future hath
  Of marvel or surprise;
Assured alone that life and death
  His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
  To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed He will not break,
  But strengthen and sustain.”

Like St. Anthony in the midst of horrid temptations, we forget that God never forsakes His children in need. ‘‘Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord’s (Rom. 14. 8). Let our motto be the words of the prophet: "Fear not, for I am with thee: turn not aside for I am thy God: I have strengthened thee, . . . and the right hand of my just one hath upheld thee. Behold all that fight against thee shall be confounded and ashamed, they shall be as nothing, and the men shall perish that strive against thee. . . . For I am the Lord thy God, who take thee by the hand, and say to thee: Fear not, I have helped thee" (Isaias 41. 10–13).

Realizing that God is with us to the bitter end, guiding our footsteps and cheering our path, may we hope and pray for the best, yet remain peaceful and happy in the worst. Worthy of inscription in golden letters upon our heart is the beautiful prayer-poem of Adelaide Procter:

"For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead—
Lead me aright,
Though strength should falter and though heart should bleed—
Through peace to light.
I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand
And follow Thee.

MAN IS A CHILD OF MERCY

J. J. Crittenden, an eminent Kentucky lawyer of bygone days, is said never to have lost a case before a jury. In defending a poor person of feeble mind, he appealed to their clemency and won it by the following allegory: "When God conceived the plan of creating man, He called the three angels that waited on His throne, Justice, Truth and Mercy, and asked them, 'Shall we make man?' Justice said, "Make him not, O God, he will trample upon Thy laws.' Truth also answered: 'Make him not, he will pollute your sanctuaries.' Mercy, kneeling and looking up through her tears, answered: 'Make him, O God, and I will watch over him in the dark moments of his life.' So God made man and said, 'O man, thou art the child of Mercy; go and live with thy brother.' "

Portland (Me.) *Transcript*, 1851.
"More Heart Throbs," p. 173.

CHAPTER XXV

GOD IS MERCY

"The Lord is sweet to all and His tender mercies are above all His works" (Ps. 144. 9). Mercy is goodness to others in need. But man's greatest needs are the remedies against sin and the means to acquire virtue. Hence God's mercy shines most resplendently in the Redemption by the Word made flesh. Mercy operates in the Church and in the sacraments bequeathed to her by the divine founder, in order to perpetuate His Spirit among men and to apply to their needy souls the fruits of the Redemption.

Love created man to be united with uncreated Love for all eternity; sin intervened, mercy came to the rescue; sin abounded, but mercy superabounded. Mercy pitied man in his weakness and lowliness, saved him from the demon's clutches, reinstated man in the friendship of God. Mercy still spares him, despite repeated falls; lifts him out of the mire, despite forgetfulness and ingratitude; makes allowances for his good intentions and earnest endeavors; overlooks insults and injuries. Mercy, long-suffering and patient, holds out to man the ever-ready hand of forgiveness and pardon. Out of the ocean of God's love flows the unbounded stream of mercy upon all mankind. Indeed, "The Lord is sweet to all and his tender mercies are above all His works." Father Faber says pointedly: "Mercy does not tire of us, does not despair of us, does not give over its pursuit of us, takes no offence, repays evil with good and is everywhere the minister of the Precious Blood of Jesus . . . wherever we go, there is mercy, the peaceful, active, broad, deep, endless mercy of our heavenly Father. If we work by day, we work in mercy's light; and at night we sleep in the lap of our Father's mercy. The courts of heaven gleam with its outpoured prolific beauty. Earth is covered with it, as the waters cover the bed of the stormy sea.

Purgatory is lighted by its gentle beams, gleaming there soft and silvery through night and day. Even the realm of hopeless exile is less palpably dark than it would be, did not some rays of mercy's light enter even there" (Faber, "Creator and Creature," London Ed., pp. 165 and 164).

Everywhere and always mercy shines forth in the words and actions of God. "I am holy, saith the Lord, and I shall not be angry forever. . . . Return to Me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee" (Jer. 3. 12 and 1). "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a moment of indignation have I hid my face a little while from thee, but with everlasting kindness have I had mercy on thee, said the Lord thy Redeemer" (Isaias 54. 7). "I am the Lord thy God, a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, unto the third and fourth generations, to them that hate me, and showing mercy unto many thousands that love me, and keep my commandments" (Deut. 5. 9–10; Ex. 20. 5–6). And the Wise Man, comparing man's mercy with God's, writes: "The compassion of man is toward his neighbor; but the mercy of God is upon all flesh. He hath mercy and teacheth and correcteth as a shepherd doth his flock. He hath mercy on him that receiveth the discipline of mercy" (Ecclus. 18. 12–14). Of all the beautiful word-pictures descriptive of mercy two are most apt: The Good Samaritan and The Divine Physician. The former binds up the wounds of the sinner and cares for him until health is restored. The latter diagnoses the ills of earth and applies the remedies of heaven. Remedies both preventative and curative, tonics as well as antitoxins. Sacramental confession and Holy Communion are most efficacious medicine for the soul.

The most human and appealing epithet applied to God is the universal, but never common, designation of father. God is our highest Father, our kindest mother is God's Church. "As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him: for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust" (Ps. 102. 13–14). God did not cast us off when we sinned, but he still remembered us as his children. "Surely Ephraim is an honorable son to me, surely he is a tender child: for since I spoke of him, I will still remember him . . . pitying I will pity him (Jer. 31. 20). Moses reminded the Israelites: "The Lord thy God hath carried thee, as a man is wont to carry his little son, all the way that you have come, until you came to this place" (Deut. 1. 31). "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold I have graven thee in my hands: thy walls are always before my eyes" (Isaias 49. 15–16).

God's mercy is shown most strikingly in the parables that sweetly flowed from the Savior's lips, especially that of the prodigal son. Here we see how God patiently *awaits* the sinner's return, earnestly *solicits* his homecoming, kindly *receives* him at the hearth and generously *reinstates* him as a full-fledged son and heir.

Thoughtless, indifferent, ungrateful man is the lost child, the prodigal son who, abandoning his Father's house, seeks a strange land. Here misery soon treads upon the heels of sin. Anxiously the Father at home thinks of his boy. No opportunity is lost to call back the wandering youth to the paternal roof, that sanctum and refuge from which so many stray. Robbed of his spiritual wealth and cast aside by companionate ingrates, the sinner enters into himself. He understands and deplores his condition. Revelry and lust had debauched his soul. For the uncertain friendship of evil associates he had given up the comforts and privileges of home. To the rescue came courage, aye the courage to return and crave pardon. The Father seeing him from afar, hastens to meet the returning youth, falls upon his neck, presses him to his heart, and invites him back again, to share his home and possessions.

Ah! our Father in heaven does all this and more to the sinner who sincerely repents and turns from his evil ways. When we return to the Church and to the holy sacraments, God puts on our fingers the ring of divine love, clothes us with the beautiful garment of grace, and soothes us with the comforts of peace.

When we consider how much we depend on God's mercy and how little we merit it, we are forcibly reminded of David's prayer for mercy. Arising from the depths of sin, like the poor king humbled and contrite, we cry out to the God of victories: "Create a clean heart in me, O

God . . . a contrite and humbled heart Thou wilt not despise'' (Ps. 50. 12, 19). May Thy mercy, which Thou hast promised to them who fear Thee, never become a cloak for sin; but rather an aid to repentance!

When the curtains of life are drawn down, we clamor for the sunshine of mercy and the rainbow of peace. Anxious to make up for lost time and wasted graces, we beg for the mercy we ourselves refused to others.

How many of us, like Shylock of old, forgetting the tender mercies of heaven, insist upon the pound of flesh, taken from nearest the heart of our enemy. How slow to realize that mercy, which droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath, is God-like, blessing him that gives and him that takes. Could we but realize that mercy, being an attribute of God himself, makes us like unto Him! Earthly power doth then show likest God's, when mercy seasons justice. In the court of justice, none of us should see salvation: we do pray for mercy; and that same prayer *doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.*

THE PASSION IN PROPHECY

"There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness: and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness, that we should be desirous of Him: despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed.

"All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way: and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was offered because it was His own will, and He opened not His mouth: He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer, and He shall not open His mouth" (Isaias 53).

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MYSTERIES OF REDEMPTION

"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which hath superabounded in us" (Eph. 1. 7).

Can we ever tire of the story of God's wonderful love for man? Awestruck, we marvel at the fact of Creation. To diffuse His own goodness and happiness, God Almighty speaks the word, and lo, from the trackless void come forth the heavens, brilliant with sun, moon and myriads of stars; the earth and sea instinct with plant and animal life; finally, man, the crown of creation, a world in himself, a miniature summary of all created wonders. Man shares existence with the minerals, growth with the plants, sensibility with the animals, intelligence and freedom with the angels, immortality with God. In Paradise what a picture of delight; no ignorance, no sorrow, no suffering, no disorderly desires, no sin, no death! The senses hearken to reason, reason obeys God! Thus endowed by nature and grace, Adam and Eve were privileged to live with God. The beauties of nature, the purl of the limpid brook, the sweet songs of the birds, the power of speaking with God and listening to Him—one and all unceasingly reminded them that though made of the earth, they were destined for God.

Indeed God had made all things well; but alas, man, a little while upon the scene, mars the divine harmony. O enticing snare, fatal folly, humiliating pride, unhappy man! A little while basking in the sunlight of heaven, now fallen from his supernatural estate, subject to unruly concupiscence, ignorance, pain and death. Innocence lost and eyes opened, he finds himself a helpless sinner, unable of himself to approach his Creator and Father.

God's love now resorted to a sublimer manifestation. From eternity God knew that the creature, deceived and allured by the Tempter, would yield to sin. He permitted sin, that He might reveal the still deeper abyss of His love, that He might give us His only Son, the Savior, to crush the serpent's head; the Priest, to shed His Blood; the Teacher, to inculcate heavenly truth; the King, to lead all men aright. "O happy fault," sings the Church at Eastertide, "that gave us such a Savior!"

Whilst the world was slumbering in the false security of sin, the eternal Word left the bosom of His Father, took flesh of the Virgin and dwelt amongst us. He was born of man that men might be spiritually reborn of God.

The poverty of Bethlehem, the flight into Egypt, the thirty years of the hidden, humble and obedient life, the three crowded years of His public ministry in doing good to all, point inevitably to His mission of love and salvation.

The Circumcision

All his acts on earth were heavenly love-beams, particularly the seven mysterious Sheddings of Blood! First the circumcision, which might aptly be termed the symbolic figure of suffering. "To the heart of Jesus already enamored of sorrow and suffering," says Father Faber, "seven days were enough for the tranquil joys of Bethlehem, joys over which the shadow of Calvary was already cast ("Precious Blood," p. 261). In the suffering babe we already see love's instinct of obedience to law! To Mary the stone knife was an omen of the Cross. To St. Joseph, who was to die before the Redemption was completed, this first blood-shedding was a joy, an anticipation of heavenly glory. To us, whose privilege is to adore, the circumcision means the sweetest of all names, Jesus, the Savior, before whom every knee must bend: in heaven, on earth and under the earth. In the circumcision, He merited the name of Savior; for in this mystery He began the work of redemption.

The Agony in the Garden

Three and thirty years have passed. It is night on Mt. Olivet; Jesus kneels absorbed in prayer; the disciples are asleep. Angels are keeping watch. The moon, which had so often been the sole witness of its Maker, keeping the watches of the night on the lonely crag, tonight casts a pale light over the prostrate figure, silent and sorrowful. Though often wearied in body, his soul never faints, His heart never tires of love for men. From heaven descends an angel bearing the chalice of suffering and woe. The sins of all mankind like a furious storm press down upon Him. Hot upon each other's trail, loom up before His mind the harassing scenes about to be enacted, and all the instruments of cruelty and torture that are to rack His tender frame. With the heroism of God, He welcomes the inhuman scourges, the mock-crown of thorns, the piercing nails, the ignominious cross. He sums up in Himself all the persecutions, martyrdoms, death struggles of the yet unborn ages.

The most racking were His mental sufferings in which the human Soul of Christ quaked and shuddered, for He realized that, despite the shedding of His blood, countless souls would remain indifferent, ungrateful, perverse, refusing to be cleansed in the river of His blood, purchasing to themselves eternal damnation. Nevertheless He bows in humble submission to the will of His Father: ''Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me, but yet not My will, but Thine be done'' (Luke 22. 42). The all-holy confronts the hideousness of sin. His love for the sinner and His hatred for sin grapple for the mastery. Christ's Sacred Flesh is the winepress of God, exuding the Precious Blood. Father Faber writes: ''The Sacred Heart can bear no more. It gives out its life blood, drop by drop, through the burning pores of the skin, the beads of blood ooze out, they stand upon His brow, they trickle down His face, they clog His hair, they blind His eyes, they fill His mouth, they mat His beard, they wet His hands, they suffuse every limb as in a universal sweat of blood.''

Our Lord in secret whisper declared to Ven. Johanna of the Cross: ''How my unconquerable desire to die for sinners pains me! This desire presses forth the Blood from my inmost veins with unspeakable pains!'' No wonder then that the same holy nun was wont to exclaim to her loving Jesus: ''The excess of Thy love, O God, has enkindled Thee as a fire. Thy sacred Body is a glowing furnace of love, flowing over, to win all souls to eternal life.''

O Jesus, the excess of Thy love makes us feel our past ingratitude for the numberless blessings we have received at Thy Hands. Move Thou our wills to a lively sorrow for our past fickleness and disloyalty! Leaning on Thy strength and merits, may we in future correspond more faithfully and wholeheartedly to the promptings of Thy Grace!

The Scourging at the Pillar

In bold contrast to the midnight scene on the Mountain, unwitnessed indeed by men, but hallowed by the presence of angels, is that of the cruel and shameful scourging in the public square of Jerusalem. We shudder at the sight of the all-holy God-man, stripped and tied to a pillar, before the wanton gaze of the populace, at the mercy of a paid set of ruffians.

The all-holy and innocent One, the Lord of Heaven and earth, permits Himself to be maltreated as a criminal and slave. According to the graphic description of Ven. Catherine Emmerick, six rude, half-civilized slaves from Egypt are chosen to enact this scene of cruelty and shame. The first two, armed with *knotted* whips, beat the meek and patient Savior in a most inhuman fashion. For about a quarter of an hour they lash Him without mercy, until their brutal strength is exhausted, and their Victim winces and sighs for pain. The second pair of ruffians vent their savage and drunken rage by applying still more torturesome instruments, thongs *barbed with thorns,* until they too are spent with fatigue and out of breath; and the Savior trembles for pain, and reeks with blood. With scarcely a moment's intermission for Jesus to take breath, the third set pounce upon Him with all the ferocity of their savage nature. The cruel inhuman *hooked* whips lash the Savior from head to foot, tear up skin and flesh, and leave the tender frame writhing in anguish, one open wound, one gleaming stream of blood.

The uncanny silence is broken by the dull, monotonous thud of the blood-reeking whips, the occasional bleating of an innocent lamb ready for slaughter in the near-by temple, and above all, by the scarcely audible, tender, piteous sighs of the Lamb of God. Could the prophet Isaias have depicted Him more accurately? . . . "There is no beauty in Him nor comeliness, . . . despised, and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, . . . we have thought Him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities. He was bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed'' (Is. 53. 2–5).

The eye of the spirit, however, looks upon Him thus clothed from head to foot in the livid robe of royal purple, the high priest of God bathed in His own blood, as the very embodiment of love divine. The poetical Father Faber commenting on this scene, in connection with the prodigality of the Precious Blood, remarks: ''It was as if the Savior foresaw how, on the Cross, the Precious Blood would have only five vents, five wells distilling salvation for the world, and it could not bear to be thus restricted, so now it presents the *whole surface of the body,* that it may be able to gush forth in unrestrained abundance as from one vast wound.''

For love of us, weak and sinful creatures, Thou didst endure this cruelty and shame. O Jesus, prostrate in spirit before Thee, we shall in silent awe adore Thee, bathed in Thy most Precious Blood. O Jesus, who by Thy shame hast atoned for our wanton and impure thoughts, desires, looks and actions; burn deeply into our hearts the remembrance of the cruel and shameful scourging.

In time of temptation, let it be our pillar of strength; in sorrow our balm of Gilead; at all times our mirror of purity, casting its reflection upon our lives and molding them after the heart of God.

The Crowning with Thorns

''Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his Espousals'' (Cant. 3. 11). On Good Friday the synagogue crowns her royal Son with the wreath of mockery. Christ became the substitute and moral head of the race. Hence His adorable Head, the noblest part of His body, was likewise to have its share of suffering. Just as all men, both Jew and Gentile, had sinned, so too both were to be the instruments of His torture. The Roman soldiers, platting a crown of thorns, press it down deep into His Godly head. The Ven. Catherine Emmerick adds some graphic details to the gospel narrative: The long, thorny spikes pierce His veins and nerves, causing the blood to stream forth from many wounds down his sacred face into His parched lips and burning tongue. St. Peter Damian avers that the thorns penetrated into the brain like a seething fire. The God-man trembles from head to foot with agonizing pain and nerve-racking torture. One of the Jews hands our Savior a reed as a mock scepter, and his fellow Jews deridingly strut before their King. Bowing and wagging their heads, and bending their knees, they mutter: ''Hail, King of the Jews!'' Desiring to send Him soon to Herod, they clothe Him with a short, tight-fitting, soldier's garment. All the while He suffers burning pains and excruciating torments, the most intolerable of all His physical sufferings. Every move of His head is like a spear jab, sending a nerve-racking shock through His whole frame, a galling, feverish twitch through His reeling brain.

Truly He has taken upon Himself the curse of Adam and the punishment of pride. O loving Savior, is it thus Thou must atone for our self-willed, disobedient, revolting thoughts and desires; the lustful, jealous, ambitious revellings of our mind? Ah, Thou life-giving fountain! Thou precious sap of life! Flow Thou upon our guilty heads and rid them of such vices and tendencies. Thy crown of thorns, O Jesus, has become our wreath of love, fragrant with the blossoms of humility, obedience, purity.

The Way of the Cross

Our Divine Lord is next led to the judgment seat of Pilate, where the weak-kneed and cowardly governor, at odds with his conscience and his God, yet courting favor with the obstinate leaders of the Jews, condemns Innocence to death. The ruffians tear from his bleeding head the broad wreath of mockery in order to exchange the little red soldier garment for the long seamless robe which had been woven by His Mother. At His side stand the two thieves with hands and neck chained, the one quiet and pensive, reflecting on his sinful past; the other loud-mouthed and audacious, heaping insult upon injury to Jesus.

Seeing the newly-made and heavy cross prepared for Him, Jesus kneels down and reverently kisses the symbol of salvation, grateful that His time has come. So we are told by Venerable Johanna of the Cross, who avers that Jesus was so filled with the desire to embrace the Cross of death, that upon beholding it, He exclaimed: ''O sacred Cross, thou art my spouse! Thou meetest me at the wedding feast! I come to deck thee with my own Precious Blood. For thee I came from heaven. Three and thirty years have I sought thee; and now, rejoicing, I find thee, key to heaven's gate.''

The trumpet sounds the funeral march of the King of kings and the Lord of lords! The procession of the Precious Blood begins. Trumpeter, boys and young men, executioners, the proud Pharisees on horseback, and finally the Son of man! All eyes are bent on Jesus, as He plods on, pale and emaciated with hunger and thirst, weak from loss of blood, all covered with wounds and sores, writhing with pain from the scourges and crown of thorns. He is indeed ''a worm and no man,'' bent low beneath the heavy cross and its burden of sin, manfully struggling on, jostled to and fro by the ruffians who goad Him on and pull Him up Calvary's path. Onward and upward He labors, His tender feet cut by the sharp protruding stones, His hands swollen, His countenance an open wound, His hair dishevelled and clotted with blood, His garments intermeshed with bleeding flesh, the Cross pressed deep and painfully, as within a socket, into His tender shoulder.

At intervals, once, twice, thrice, and more, He falls upon a projecting stone to the ground. Goaded on again with whips and knotted cords, midst hisses and jeers and curses, He is dragged on, lest He drop by the wayside, before the height be reached. Happily, one brief ray of brightness cheers His path: the meeting with His Blessed Mother and His beloved disciple.

Father Faber: ''The sight of Mary's face quickens the beatings of His heart and makes the Blood flow more freely. . . . The Way of the Cross is a mystery of unions, of meetings and harmonies. . . . It is the mystery of the Passion in which the Mother and Son come together again. She had seen in spirit and suffered in soul all He had endured. . . . But now they come together *visibly* again, and are not separated until the tomb is closed. . . . Then also the *Cross and the Precious Blood are now for the first time united.* Hitherto the saving blood has flowed apart from the saving cross. It is the union of the two in which the secret virtue of redeeming grace resides. Now the weight of the cross opens old wounds and causes new ones. The blood and the cross are together now. This is the Betrothal, and the Marriage will be on Calvary. Here is the actual prelude of Redemption. . . . The Precious Blood has but one law: it must flow, anywhere, everywhere, always it must flow. It is the one mission of the Precious Blood—to be shed.''

Is it thus, O Jesus, Thou satisfiest for our sins of scandal, by which we lead so many souls astray? With a deep sense of shame and sorrow we shall compensate our scandals by mortification and edification. With patience and resignation may we follow in thy blood-stained footsteps, as did Mary, Thy Mother, when she made the first stations of the Cross. In the past we have been unwilling Simons, preferring the ease of pleasure to the burden of duty. Take from us our aversion for the cross and impart the grace to see Thy holy will in everything. Jesus forewarned us against the hollow mockery of the world. ''The servant is not above the master. If they have persecuted me, they will also revile you.''

The Crucifixion

"And finally the gruesome scene stands still
When Jesus 'rives on Calvary's barren hill,
His pallid form extends to God apart,
Ere bursts in loving death His Sacred Heart!"

At last the divine drama halts. Our Savior arrives on Calvary's rugged heights. He is stripped. His sacred flesh, adhering to the blood-stained garments, is ruthlessly torn off. Rev. Luis de Granada, one of Spain's greatest preachers and ascetic writers, exclaims: ''Behold! He Who has decked the heavens with fleecy clouds and clothed the fields with smiling green and fragrant flowers, He is here robbed of His garments; the beauty of the angels is disfigured; the heavenly heights are brought low, the eternal Majesty is shamed and degraded."

A life replete with brilliant examples of humility and poverty, but none so sublime as this. What a tribute to the nothingness of earth! What an inspiration to detachment!

Jesus is nailed to the cross. Who can imagine the grief and grinding torments of the Blessed Mother, as she beheld with her own eyes and heard with her own ears the frightful hammer beats, fastening her Son to the wood of the Cross? His limbs are pitilessly stretched and disjointed with cruelty savage beyond description. Who but the God-man could have endured this ordeal!

At last the Savior has found a resting place, whereon to lay His weary head; the Precious Blood, its home. The Cross of Salvation is raised aloft, that all might behold the mystery of love. Too deep for words. An object of faith so vast that the mind cannot fathom it. Luis de Granada depicts this scene in glowing colors: "How wonderful is not this place! Indeed here is the house of God, the gate of heaven, the land of promise, the abode of salvation: Here is planted the tree of life, here is erected the ladder of Jacob, by which the angels descend to man and man ascends to God. My soul, this is the place for prayer. Kneel down, adore, thank God for the divine blessings of salvation."

Of all the sheddings this is the crowning one, the world-saving flow *in its completion.* For our Redeemer it is the battle won, the victory over Satan, the completion of redemption. For us it means the possibility of saving our souls by cooperating with grace.

How slowly, how silently, how symbolically that saving blood oozes forth from His every limb, down upon His sacred feet that for us trod the ways of peace and blessing, soaking the cross and trickling down upon the sod beneath. Flow, it must; yea, it seems to have a predilection for its enemies, sprinkling them, too, with its saving graces. Though they mockingly taunt Him, who has so often helped others, now to help Himself and, if He be God, to come down from the Cross and avenge His enemies, He patiently bears it all, wrapt in silent prayer. His revenge is the revenge of love: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Ven. Catharine Emmerick gives a beautiful description of the two thieves. The thief to His left, usually called Gesmas by tradition, likewise mocks our Savior. "If Thou be the Christ, help Thyself." Dismas, at His right, who had been under the spell of the older robber chieftain and misled by him into a life of sin and crime, but now heeding the final call of grace, is moved with compassion for the innocent Jesus. By an inward grace, he recognizes before him the Mother and the Son, who had cured him of leprosy when an infant in the wilds of the Egyptian borderland. In gratitude he now defends Jesus. He reproaches the insulting blasphemers: "How is it possible that ye continue to blaspheme Him who in return knows but the *revenge of love,* who suffers in silence and patience, and even prays for His enemies and persecutors? Truly, He is a Prophet, He is our King, He is the Son of God." The excited mob sought to stone the good thief, but they were scattered by Abenadar. Turning to his brother robber, he rebukes him for his haughtiness and impenitence, saying: "Have you not seen how this Man, though innocent as a lamb, suffers with God-like patience and resignation, with an unheard-of calmness and decision, praying for His enemies; praying for us who deserve torture and death? And still you dare to insult and blaspheme Him, whereas you should tremble in His presence and beg His pardon." Then turning from the silent and sullen impenitent to his loving Savior, Dismas, contrite and humble, pleads for mercy. "My God, if Thou condemn me, it serves me right, for I have no claim to Thy mercy. Yet I beg Thee to remember me when Thou enterest Thy Kingdom." And Jesus, Who in His infancy had cleansed the leper child with the water in which He had bathed, now cleanses the penitent with the Precious Blood. Looking with pleasure upon him as upon one of the first-fruits of His Blood, our Savior added the consoling assurance: "This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

By this time, Calvary is well-nigh deserted. The Pharisees, soldiers and torturers, feeling secure of their Victim, have vanished down the hill. The centurion Longinus and his guards remain. Mary, His Mother, Magdalen, Salome, Mary of Cleophas and the disciple St. John kneel at the foot of the cross in prayer and adoration. Oh!

what a scene of sadness! Mary, overcome with a mother's solicitude, is burning with the desire to die with her Divine Son. Pointing to the disciple of love, Jesus compassionates and consoles her, saying: "Behold thy Mother." That moment Mary, the Mother of God, became our Mother, conceiving us her children in sorrow at the foot of the Cross. Indeed Mary is the long-expected valiant woman, spoken of in the Scriptures, and we are her children, once fallen sons of Eve, but now freed sons of Mary and children of the Promise. The adoring group on Calvary, so intent upon their Savior, scarcely noticed Nature's tribute to her God.

No sooner had He, the light of the world, been raised to the Cross, all Nature became an unbearable darkness. Fear came upon man and beast. Groping about in the streets and on the flat roofs, men looked about dazed and bewildered, hiding their faces and bewailing their plight. Many looking heavenward wrung their hands, crying out: "His blood be upon His murderers." Others, kneeling down at a distance from the awful scene of Deicide, struck their breasts, imploring mercy and pardon. In vain did the skeptical Pharisees try to give the turn of events a natural explanation. In vain the high-priest tried to establish peace and order. Chaos reigned supreme in the streets, in the homes, in the market place, in the temple. Desolation filled the heavens, desolation covered the earth. A fitting prelude for the things to come ("Gethsemane und Golgotha," based on Catharine Emmerick and others).

But what is all this, compared with the God-man's desolation of spirit! Breaking the death-like silence, a mighty cry bursts forth from His heaving soul: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Writhing in pain and agony, consumed with anguish and woe, mocked by men, forsaken by God! Thus He sums up in Himself the dereliction of all men to come until the end of time. He merits for us the grace of final perseverance: hope, strength and courage for the final journey into eternity.

In the twilight haze the Savior hangs, pale unto death, from loss of blood. His parched and gall-embittered lips utter the groan: "I thirst!" Ah! Christian reader, such is His thirst for souls! Such the ardent desire to shed the last loving drop of blood! Jesus, our Model, Teacher and Guide, impress deeply upon our minds and hearts thy own valuation and appreciation of souls!

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

The moment of death, so earnestly desired, has come. The trembling Mother casts one last tearful look at her dying Son. A shiver creeps over the limbs of the Savior; a cold, uncanny sweat breaks out upon the once glowing wounds of love; a loud voice rends the heavens, proclaiming to the world the final word of love: "It is consummated." Then with God-like peace and resignation: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." The work of love, the task of redemption is fulfilled. The Savior's soul descends into the Limbo of the Fathers, to set free the souls of the just.

Truly these seven words of the dying God-man are pregnant with divine love, radiant with divine beauty. They are, as it were, the testimony of the Precious Blood, sealing its life work here on earth. Christ's life of love thus ended in the sacrifice of love. Having spent His life in teaching and showing man the way of salvation and doing good to all, He likewise died for all. "He gave Himself a Redemption for all" (1 Tim. 2. 6). "He bore our sins in His body upon the tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice" (1 Pet. 2. 24).

Christian soul, look up in spirit to Calvary to the Victim of Love. The God-man, with arms outstretched to Heaven, is pleading mercy. His face is aglow with love, His heart bursting with love divine, with love that no created mind can fathom, no human tongue describe. Every drop of blood is a divine voice proclaiming: "God wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live." Greater love than this no man hath than to give his life for a friend. But Jesus loved us, when as yet we were His enemies, vile and helpless creatures. He loved us and washed us in His blood. See and behold the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world! Behold here the height and depth, the length and breadth of that love that promised to draw all hearts to Himself! Man is redeemed, joy thrills the earth, jubilation fills heaven. The poet in us exclaims:

> "Behold the Man! three hours brave fight with death!
> No drop of blood too precious to be spent!
> The holocaust is ours aft dying breath;
> Up leaps the earth, and rocks and graves are rent.
> 'It is the Son of God,' the captain said.
> The heavens ope', an angel band appears,
> To treasure up the blood which Jesus shed;
> And contrite man the throne of mercy nears."

THE TRANSFIXION

But the Precious Blood still flows. The seventh bloodshedding is not only a proof of Christ's death, but also an additional sign of love. Truly and literally Christ died, His heart bursting, as sacred writers aver, with love. That last gush of blood which followed the thrust of the soldier's lance foreshadowed the significant fact that the Precious Blood would continue its saving flow. The Sacred Heart shall open its portals, so long as breathes a mortal here below to share its love, so long as throbs a disconsolate heart, seeking refuge in the haven of peace and rest. The Sacred Heart that after death "wooed the Centurion's lance and cast forth its last hidden blood-drop upon its Pagan liberator, to baptise him with all the cleansing graces of conversion," that same Sacred Heart still lives, glorified and stigmatized and forever united to the Son of God in heaven. Not only the heart but also the pierced hands and feet are radiant with the glory of God, a ceaseless joy to the angels and saints. The five wounds, whence the Precious Blood had "welled forth for us sinful creatures unto life everlasting," now looms up as so many "roseate suns to gladden the palaces of the heavenly Jerusalem." Should not our Lord keep His five stigmata as trophies of His hard-earned victory over sin and death, as life-giving sources to which He, the "Author and Finisher of our faith" can forever point with a victor's joy and pride? And should not we, His adopted brethren, in all difficulties and trials take refuge to the Savior's wounds, our peace, consolation and strength here below; our joy and our crown hereafter? Can we resist the invitation: "Come to me all ye that labor and are heavily burdened and I will refresh you. Seek Me and you shall find rest for your souls?''

The Precious Blood and the Church

No subject of our holy religion is so thought-provoking, so doleful and yet so consoling for us poor sinners, as the contemplation of Jesus crucified. The Seventh Mystery, the flowing of blood and water after Christ's death, typifies the unceasing flow of grace in the Church. The Council of Vienne says: ''The Divine Word in His assumed nature did not only wish to be nailed to the cross and die thereon; but also after giving up His spirit, He wanted His side pierced, in order to form, from the water and blood, the immaculate and Virgin Mother, the Church, the bride of Christ; even as from the side of the first man cast into a deep sleep, Eve, his wife, was formed.'' The Church is the bride of Christ and the spiritual mother of all the faithful. It is impossible to have God for our Father, unless we have the Church for our Mother.

The Church which came forth from her Crucified Spouse, still bears aloft the emblems of His victory, the Cross and the Chalice, the symbols of redemption and grace. These, her children must revere with filial affection, ever mindful that they show forth for all time the great price of Redemption: ''He hath purchased the Church with His own blood'' (Acts 20. 28).

May we, then, love the Church, the appointed dispenser of the Precious Blood: ''as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered himself up for it. . . . That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, . . . holy and without blemish'' (Eph. 5. 25–27). Since Christ and His bride are holy, we, too, their spiritual children, must likewise be adorned with a virtuous life. Brought into the wine-cellar of our Divine Spouse, we were given to drink of His Precious Blood and to eat of His Sacred Body in Commemoration of Him: May we always be mindful of this price wherewith He has purchased life and salvation for us and made us a people acceptable to Him, capable of meriting heaven by faith and good works. Since God's love has given us all, may we in turn dedicate our whole being and all our works to Him.

PART V

SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF CHRIST

CHAPTER XXVII

BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

There is only one object of priceless worth in this world. It is the human soul, created by God according to His image and likeness. Hence God loves the soul with an infinite and personal love. This He proved by the hypostatic or personal union with human nature when He came to earth. In His sacramental life He individualizes His love for us.

The same ruby drops of infinite worth, shed in the Garden, on the Streets of Jerusalem, on Calvary, are gathered up in the treasury of the Church. The sacraments are the continuation of the earthly ministrations of Him Who went about doing good to all. They are wonderful inventions and dispensations of divine love and mercy, disclosing the supernatural under natural forms. They are the visible signs of the invisible graces of the Precious Blood. Without the seven sacraments the Church could not remain a living organism, dispensing life.

''Must not God mean us to be saved when there is not a turn in our fortune, not a winding in the road of life, but we find Him waiting with some strange beautiful invention of love? Truly we live encircled by His grace, which flows around us like the plentiful bright air. Our minds are enlightened by the splendors of heavenly truth and our wills led sweetly captive by the winning mysteries of the sacramental life of Jesus. Our lives are charmed by great sacraments and we are each of us the center of invisible grandeurs and spiritual miracles.

''Grace is superabundant, and incessant and universal. The abundance of grace is almost as wonderful as its nature. We live in an ocean of grace as fishes live in the deep sea. It is above, beneath, around us, everywhere and overwhelmingly. . . . It cannot be too often repeated that the wakeful person breathes grace, lives in its light, and leans on its support, as much as we breathe the air and see by the daylight and have the hard safe crust of the planet beneath our feet. (See ''Creator and Creature,'' London Ed., pp. 222, 284, 285, 286.)

From the cradle to the grave man basks in the smiling sunshine of God's love and bathes in the refreshing fountain of grace. The child, born into the world with the inherited stain of original sin, is turned away from God, its supernatural end, until the Saving Blood of Jesus washes off the taint. ''By one man, in whom all have sinned, sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men. For if death reigned through one, much more shall grace and justice and life reign through one, Jesus Christ'' (Rom. 5. 12). Adam, the divinely constituted head of the race, bequeathed his sin and its dreadful effects to all his descendants (except Mary and her Divine Son); Christ, the second head and restorer of the race, by His death on the Cross, obtained for all men the means of grace and life eternal. The first grace is imparted in the sacrament of Baptism. ''Amen, Amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he *cannot* enter into the Kingdom of God'' (John 3. 5). In a word the child, conceived in sin, is spiritually reborn in Christ and made a member of Christ's mystical body, the Church.

The gloom of original sin, which hangs like hideous night upon the souls of the unbaptized, is dispersed at the dawn of baptismal grace. Gathering the little ones, Jesus said: ''Suffer children to come to me: for of such is the kingdom of God. Amen, I say to you: Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a child, shall not enter into it'' (Luke 18. 16, 17). The same God whispers fondly into the ear of the newly-baptized: ''You were heretofore darkness, but now light in the Lord.'' ''No more strangers and foreigners; but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone . . . in whom you also are built together into a habitation of God in the spirit'' (Eph. 5. 8; 2. 19–23).

Baptism is water flowing at the command of Christ from the rock, not at the touch of an unbelieving Moses, but at the touch of God's Minister. Man, born into the world, a sin-stained child of Adam, is like the helpless paralytic awaiting the moving of the waters. In the laver of regeneration, the priest sets the seal of faith upon the soul and dedicates it to the triune God. St. Paul compares the soul after baptism to the burial and resurrection of Christ. ''Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death? For we are buried together with Him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together *in the likeness of His death,* we shall be also in the *likeness of His resurrection''* (Rom. 6. 3–5).

Millions, rescued from the deluge, enter the ark, not of Noah, but of Jesus Christ. Clothed with baptismal innocence, they arise with the ark over the surrounding mists and darkness. As the Jews crossed the Red Sea into the Promised Land, so, too, do we in baptism cross over from the bondage of original sin into the promised land of Christ's Church. We renounce allegiance to the Egyptian task-masters of the world and forswear the onions and flesh-pots of pleasure, to serve Christ, our leader, to partake of His heavenly manna and to drink from the rock of His life-giving doctrine and sacraments.

Millions of souls are washed by water and the Holy Ghost. Whilst the human minister pours the baptismal water over the head, God himself invisibly imparts the Precious Blood to cleanse the soul from sin and adorn it with sanctifying grace. Every hour counts its thousands snatched from Satan's clutches, won for God, marked for heaven. Countless children, passing out of this life, dyed with the Precious Blood, wing their flight as angels sweet with innocence up to heaven, to adore ''before the throne of the Lamb day and night.'' Not a few who are destined for a longer life, carry their robe of baptismal innocence into their boyhood and girlhood years. Many a loving angel is guarding the gate of the youthful soul, to preserve this gem of priceless worth. What a joy, what a crowning achievement to have borne it beneath the shield of watchfulness, guarded it with the sword of prayer and preserved it unspotted unto the day of Judgment.

Baptism makes candidates for heaven. Unfortunately millions of heathen children die unbaptized. Although these probably attain some form of natural bliss consisting of knowledge and love, yet they are barred from the supernatural bliss of the beatific knowledge and beatific love. To enrich as many as possible of these with the gift of faith in baptism, the Association of the Holy Childhood, aided by the prayers and alms of the faithful, rescues helpless infants from exposure and neglect. Cooperating in this noble work, we shall enjoy the prayers and gratitude of those whom we helped to rescue.

Confirmation

By implanting the theological virtue of faith and conferring sanctifying grace with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, baptism lays the foundation of the Christian life; confirmation increases sanctifying grace and infuses a greater abundance of the sevenfold gift. Signed with the sign of the Cross and anointed with the chrism of salvation, the child of God becomes a soldier of Christ, to go forth into the arena of life a valiant defender of the faith, a courageous follower of Christ Crucified.

The chrism is made of olive oil and balsam. Oil signifies and imparts strength. It enables the wrestler of God to grapple with the threefold enemy of salvation. The sweet-scented balsam, in the hands of the divine Physician, preserves the youthful soul from moral contagion. Theophilus of Antioch says: "We are called Christians, because we are anointed with the oil of God." St. Cyprian speaks of the confirmed as being "anointed and perfected with the seal of the law."

The Sacrament of Youth

Confirmation is primarily intended to safeguard and strengthen youth. Jesus one day met a rich young man with prepossessing attractions. He had kept the Commandments from his early days and now looked wistfully for new worlds to conquer.

Though eager to follow Christ, he was unwilling to sacrifice his wealth and worldly ambitions. Sadly he parted from Christ, who pitied his lack of resolution. Jesus loves and sympathizes with youth, particularly at the parting of the ways. This love and sympathy is enshrined in a magnificent sacrament for youth, a salutary uplift, a saving aid.

Just when childhood is taking its dangerous passage to manhood, when the first fruits of independence tantalize youthful inexperience, the sacrament of confirmation comes to the rescue. It seals up the grace of baptism. Anticipating our need of courage guided by prudence, it tries to win us over before the world attracts us. Confirmation enrolls us under the ensign of Christ in the actual militia of God. It dedicates our youthful lives to the Holy Spirit, whose light and love it invites. Nothing can be more opportune than this sacrament.

How grateful ought we be for the salutary fear of offending God. A wholesome dread of sin is the beginning of love. Piety enables us to love God as a Father and obey Him because we love Him. Knowledge discovers God's holy will and sees everything in the light of Mount Sinai. Fortitude accepts life's burdens and fights its battles. Counsel curbs rash daring. Moderating boldness with caution, it arms fiery youth against the wiles of the devil; forewarns him of the false maxims of the world; prepares him against the enticements of his own flesh. How superior to earthly science the heavenly light of understanding, clarifying our knowledge and intensifying our appreciation of divine truths. If we appreciate faith, we also profess it, and, if need be, die for it. Living the faith, youth will not be led astray in the byways of vice. How supreme, finally, the gift of wisdom creating in us a relish for the things of God. Everything is gauged in the light of eternity. Man's final end is the norm of conduct; God's law, man's highest privilege and first duty.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION

''Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the City'' (Apoc. 22. 14).

In His boundless mercy God did not confine the remission of sin to baptism and to perfect contrition. To baptism, which can be received but once, He added a sacrament, distinct from baptism that can be received as often as we make a contrite confession and a firm purpose of amendment. A future fall does not destroy the present sorrow, but on the contrary the present disposition gradually effects a change of habits. By perfect contrition sin is forgiven; but Christ, in His mercy, gave us a safer, surer and easier method, namely sacramental confession, which requires no more than imperfect contrition. With confession, the sorrow based on a child-like fear of offending God and of deserving, in consequence, the punishment of hell, suffices for the remission of sin. The same is true of that sorrow which is fed on supernatural hope or gratitude.

But, alas, the enemy of mankind sought to frustrate the workings of God's mercy. To this end, he pricked man's inborn pride and caused him to rebel against the divinely instituted sacrament of reconciliation. Had the ''Reformers'' realized that Penance is one of the poles of the spiritual universe, a citadel of virtue and next to the Holy Eucharist the greatest moral force in the universe, they perhaps would not have become instruments of evil in robbing a large portion of mankind of this important means of salvation. Had they realized how useful and necessary confession is for the individual and for the social conscience they would have spared themselves and the world at large untold misery and moral degradation.

The Catechism of Trent, written shortly after the

"Reformation," declares: "Confession contributes powerfully to the preservation of social order. Abolish sacramental confession, and that moment, you deluge society with all sorts of secret crimes. . . . Crimes which men, once depraved by vicious habits, will not dread to commit in open day. The salutary shame that attends confession restrains licentiousness, bridles desire, and checks the evil inclinations of corrupt nature." Truly, this sacrament is the stronghold of Christian virtue and morality in a world tainted with self-worship and festering with corruption. For the proud, the lustful and the indifferent, it is the gate of the fortress where humility, purity and zeal hold sway. For the weak and frail, sacramental confession is the refuge of safety and strength. Today millions of men and women outside the Catholic Church have learned to realize this all-important fact and are outspoken in praise of the confessional. In the Anglican Church confession is upheld and practiced, although the liberal wing bids fair to uproot this "tendency towards Rome." It is but natural to expect that the confessional doing God's work will always have persecutors and opponents, willing tools of ignorance and of evil. Some of these are outspoken and crude in their denunciations of what they call a pernicious relic of priestcraft. Others, more thoughtful and less vehement, attempt to salve their conscience by the oft-repeated (but never proved) assertion that confession is a human invention. Alas, what malice on the one hand, what ignorance on the other! Our age of enlightenment, how benighted in spiritual vision and heavenly discernment!

A Divine Institution

Let us apply the test Gamaliel, the Jew, applied concerning the new religion, Christianity. If confession were a mere human invention it could not have survived the storms of opposition and persecution for centuries. Furthermore, the Church could not have enforced so difficult a practice, one so distasteful to proud and lustful man, unless the people who confessed were thoroughly convinced that it came from heaven and was commanded by God. If at the time of the Oriental heresies in the 4th and 5th centuries, and of the Greek schism in the 9th century, sacramental confession had not been recognized as an essential part of Christian dogma and practice, certainly the seceders from the Church would not have adopted it. On the contrary, sacramental confession was deemed so necessary and so universally acceptable that they kept it, despite their general opposition to Rome and many of her practices.

If the priest had invented confession, what a fool he was to include himself among its victims! The priest, in fact, is a double victim. Not only must he spend long and wearisome hours in a narrow and stuffy confessional, listening to unsavory tales and often tragic life histories, but he himself must submit the burden of his own conscience to the power of the keys. His own confession, humiliating as it may sometimes be, is by far the easier of the two. Only an extraordinary zeal for souls can induce the priest to persevere in the unenviable task of hearing confessions.

If sacramental confession, therefore, is no human invention, it must be a divine institution. We shall prove it likewise from sacred history and reason. Christ had the power to forgive sin. He promised His own power to the apostles and their successors. The Risen Savior actually gave them this power.

Christ had the power to forgive sins. He proved it to the skeptical Pharisees of His day. He pardoned the paralytic, saying: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." This aroused the ire of the skeptics, who said within themselves: He blasphemeth. But Jesus seeing their thoughts answered: "Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise, and walk? But that you may know that the *Son of Man hath power on Earth to forgive sins,* then said He to the man sick with the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house, and he arose and went into his house. And the multitude seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men" (Matt. 9. 3–8).

Secondly, our Lord promised, already before His bitter passion and death, to communicate His own divine power over sin to His human representatives in the Church. To St. Peter, the first head of the Church, He promised the supreme authority to open and close heaven to men: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven'' (Matt. 16. 19). In subordination to Peter, the other apostles received the same comprehensive power of binding and loosing the conscience of men (Matt. 18. 18). The conscience is bound by laws, penalties, penances and other moral obligations; it is loosed by dispensation from law, removal of penalties, remission of temporal punishments due to sin, but above all by the forgiveness of sin.

In the third place, Christ, shortly after His triumphant Resurrection, actually conferred the power of forgiving and retaining sin. The apostles, still perplexed and frightened, were waiting in the upper chamber for something to happen. Suddenly Jesus entered through the barred doors. In the deep silence of the occasion they beheld with open-eyed wonder the glorified Savior and heard Him breathe His Holy Spirit of peace upon them: ''Peace be to you. . . . As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained'' (John 20. 19–23). In a word, they were given a power never granted to man before in the history of the world; a tremendous power, a divine power, a power identical with that which Christ received from His heavenly Father: ''As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost,'' etc.

THE NATURE OF THIS POWER

It was not the power to preach penance which the prophets had received long before. Nor was it merely to declare the forgiveness of sins, as the Levitical priest could do, but in sooth to blot out sin. In other words, a new power, unheard of before. The power over sin's dominion, the power to cancel sin, to rejuvenate the soul with divine grace and strengthen it in the fight against temptation.

It is a judiciary power. The priest is not only a dispenser but also a judge. He discerns whether or not the penitent is worthy of forgiveness. The priest is not responsible for the wilful deceptions or hypocrisies of the penitent, provided he make use of ordinary judgment and discretion. All the conditions of true repentance must precede or accompany the confession, otherwise the absolution given by the priest is useless, if not sacrilegious. Since the priestly power of judging essentially includes the power of punishing sin, the penitent must accept and perform the penance enjoined. Punishment implies satisfaction or atonement for guilt.

As far as duration is concerned, the power of absolving the contrite sinner, like that of conferring Baptism and of consecrating the Holy Eucharist, could not be limited to apostolic times; but was necessarily intended as an essential part of the equipment which the Divine Founder bequeathed to His Church. Instituted for the very purpose of alleviating and healing human weakness, it must continue as long as heaves a sinful breast this side of heaven. In a word, the remedy for sin must remain as long as the evil lasts, namely until the end of the world, else Christ, for countless millions, will have died in vain.

Confession Is Natural

Experience shows that confession is quite natural. To have another share the secret that burdens us is an instinct of nature. Before retiring, the little child puts its arms around mother and whispers into her forgiving ear the tiny faults of the day. When servants, faithful in the service, happen to lose or break something of value, they confess and crave pardon. Lovers often make an open confession of their past, before taking each other as man and wife. Husbands and wives make mutual confessions, in order to compose differences and regain confidence in each other. Friends seal their friendship by mutual confession and forgiveness. In the emotional excitement of camp-meetings and revivals, life-histories and life-tragedies are revealed to an indiscreet world. During Catholic missions and Forty Hours, saints and sinners stand in line awaiting their turn for sacramental confession.

It is true that man's pride rebels against revealing the inmost secrets of the heart; but his weakness, his need of consolation and strength, impel him to seek divine aid. They humble man into submission and obtain peace.

What is more natural in distress than to ease oneself of the burden that weighs upon the heart? What is more calculated to relieve the sinner than revealing his secret troubles to one who is human enough to appreciate the sinner's frailty, strong enough to administer a firm yet gentle rebuke, one who is an expert in guiding and consoling, one in whose heart the sacramental secrets lie buried forever as in the heart of God, one finally who, in the name of Christ and by His power, breaks the shackles of sin? The naturalness of confession was brought home to the writer by a striking incident. As he was making the rounds of duty in a hospital some years ago, a certain non-Catholic patient requested him to hear her confession. Not being authorized to absolve her, he declined hearing her story. Instead, he tried to instruct and aid her in making an act of perfect contrition. Her sorrow was quite evident, but this did not ease her conscience. She felt impelled to make an outward confession. Having done so, she felt relieved and said: "How consoling it is when Jesus does forgive." No doubt many a one outside the Church, seeking peace and solace, envies the Catholic, whose Church furnishes him a means of grace so heavenly, yet so natural, as Confession.

Confession Is Salutary

In the sacrament of penance Christ has given His Church a fountain of grace and holiness for the sinner, a spiritual directory for the young and the unwary, an arsenal of strength for the weak and wavering, a means of solace for the disconsolate, a source of peace for the scrupulous, in a word, help for all. When the proud sinner wearies of the husks of sin and learns to despise the swine with which he had cast his lot, he feels the need of a strong hand to lean upon, a staunch and prudent heart to whom he can unburden himself, a patient ear to listen to his disillusionment, a kind friend to pardon him and lead him back to peace with himself and his God. The anxious and scrupulous soul, on the verge of losing faith in himself and hope in God, finds a savior in the prudent and tactful confessor. The cold conscience is warmed and the lax conscience bolstered up.

The sick man needs a physician. The sinner needs to start over on the road of life. In the pulpit the priest speaks to all, but only in a general way, to show the hideousness of sin and the beauty of virtue, the divine strength and consolation in the sacraments. But in the confessional the priest is more than a medical lecturer, he is the physician of the soul. There he can speak directly to the soul about itself. There even the liar tells the truth, the deceitful and dishonest man reveals the hidden side. Perfect candor and truth prevail also on the part of the spiritual director.

In the confessional the young are saved from their own ignorance and weakness, from physical and moral wreckage. Evil habits which might easily infect whole schools or whole communities are discovered and rooted out. Consciences are educated. Innocence is preserved. Guilt is averted. The thief, as a condition of forgiveness, must restore the stolen goods. The drunkard is made to see his folly and prevailed upon to take the pledge. The addict to secret vice, the libertine, the one who makes marriage a cloak for sin, is obliged to repent and avoid the near occasion of sin. Salutary advice, not always wanted, is sadly needed and the confessional is the place where it is courageously given and patiently accepted.

CHAPTER XXIX

CONFESSION IS NECESSARY

The necessity of sacramental confession is not derived from the natural law but from the divine precept as interpreted by the Church. For all Christians guilty of mortal sin after baptism, confession is a necessary means of salvation. In the Old Law God demanded perfect contrition; in the New Dispensation He established His Church and instituted a special sacrament to forgive sin and impart sanctifying grace. Imperfect contrition suffices, when joined to sacramental confession. Perfect contrition based on unselfish and perfect love of God for His sake, without at least the desire to confess, will no longer justify the sinner, for contrition to be perfect must include the desire of employing the divinely ordained means of reconciliation. (See Koch-Preuss, "Moral Theology," Vol. II, p. 135.) Since God wills all men to be saved, He will not condemn anyone in good faith or who is morally or physically unable to go to confession. Hence we say that sacramental confession is the ordinary, and perfect contrition the extraordinary, means of forgiving mortal sin.

No man can lay down his own conditions for salvation. Only God, our Supreme Lord and Master, has the moral right to do this. God has done so and man must submit to the divine plan. Man must submit his conscience and its burden of sin to those divinely appointed ministers of God, the successors of the apostles and their helpers, the bishops and duly authorized priests.

If contrition in the sight of God blots out sin, why then is confession to a priest necessary? The very difficulty of perfect contrition for the vast majority of people in the world (and of the world) would seem to demand a remedy for sin that is easier, safer and surer. If we follow the certain opinion and reject as unsafe and risky the merely probable opinion concerning the nature of perfect contrition, we must say that imperfect contrition is much easier than perfect contrition. If for perfect contrition we demand a pure and unselfish love for God for His own sake and above all things, whether it be the love of benevolence or the mutual love of friendship, and reject as doubtfully sufficient for justification the contrition based on hope of reward or on gratitude to God, then we must say, perfect contrition is anything but easy. Is it easy to forget all about ourselves and abstract from God's goodness to us and from God's fidelity in keeping His promise to reward us? Is it easy to love God with an unselfish and pure love for His sake only? Is it easy to love God above everything else in the world? Is it easy to hate sin (to which corrupt nature is attracted) as the greatest evil, in itself, and to love God whom we do not see as the greatest Good, in Himself? With this preface in mind we can correctly interpret and appreciate what the Catechism of Trent says about the difficulty and rarity of sovereign and perfect contrition: "Contrition, it is true, blots out sin, but who is ignorant, that to effect this, it must be so intense, so ardent, so vehement, as to bear a proportion to the magnitude of the crimes, which it effaces? This is a degree of contrition which few reach, and hence through contrition alone, very few indeed could hope to obtain the pardon of their sins. It therefore became necessary that the Almighty, in His mercy, should afford a less precarious and less difficult means of reconciliation, and of salvation; and this He has done, with admirable wisdom, by giving to His Church the Keys of the kingdom of heaven. . . . Justly then do the Holy Fathers proclaim, that by the Keys of the Church, the gate of heaven is thrown open."

It is not sufficient to confess to God alone but one must confess to the priest. This doctrine was taught already by St. Augustine: "Let no man," says he, "say within himself, 'I repent in secret with God, for God, who has the power to pardon me, knows the inmost sentiments of my heart.' Was there no reason for saying: whatsoever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven; no reason why the Keys were given to the Church of God?" St. Ambrose, refuting the Novatian idea that God alone forgives sin, writes: "Who yields greater reverence to God, he who obeys or he who resists His commands? God commands us to obey His ministers; and by obeying them, we honor God alone'' (On penance, bk. I, Chap. 2).

If Christ thought it necessary to institute a special sacrament for the very purpose of blotting out sin from the heart of man, surely He desires and wills that the sinner make use of this sacrament. If the apostles and their successors received the power of the Keys, the faithful must submit to this power. If the bishops and priests, as successors of the apostles and disciples, are to judge who is worthy of absolution from sin and who is not worthy of pardon, they must hear the sins of the faithful. But they cannot hear, unless the penitent confesses. If the penitent were not obliged to confess, he would seek all sorts of excuses and exemptions. The judicial power includes the right to inflict punishment, but how can the bishop or priest inflict proportionate punishment without a full knowledge of the case? If confession were merely useful, but not necessary, who would submit? Therefore God knowing the needs and tendencies of man made sacramental confession not merely a counsel of perfection but a law for man's own good.

''God knew our frame, he remembered that we are dust'' easily blown about by the storm of temptation. He knew that we, frail and careworn pilgrims in this vale of tears, would only too frequently be tossed to and fro between the wiles of Satan and the weakness of our own nature. Even though in baptism, we be shod with the shoes of peace and innocence, yet in the course of our pilgrimage through life we accumulate the dust and dirt of sin. Pitying our proneness to fall, God instituted in His Church the cleansing bath of penance.

''Sacramental confession,'' says Father Faber, *''is the authentic dripping of the Precious Blood upon the head of the repentant sinner.''* Through the priest, the guardian of the Precious Blood, who holds the key to this heavenly sanguiduct, can the sinner ease his conscience as often as he sincerely repents and earnestly purposes to amend his life. Like the good Samaritan, the priest of God pours the Precious Blood into the wounds of the soul and they are divinely healed. The Prodigal Son repents and is taken back into his Father's house. The sin-possessed soul casts a sigh of relief and comfort, knowing by divine assurance that his sins, like the herd of swine, are cast headlong into the bottom of the sea. Through her priests, Holy Mother Church invites us to wash our robes of sullied innocence in the Blood of the Lamb, in the cleansing, healing laver of penance. There the contrite soul finds strength and courage to beat off the assaults of the world, of the flesh and the devil; there it finds hope and victory in every struggle of life. Oh! the interior joy and peace of conscience, that drives away disquiet from the mind, sadness from the heart and gives the soul a foretaste of heaven's sweet peace.

No doubt, for millions of human souls this ever-flowing, ever-accessible fount of the Precious Blood means all the difference between everlasting torment and unending bliss. Millions, who after baptism unfortunately suffer spiritual shipwreck, depend on this second plank of safety to sail securely over the shoals of sin, to weather the high waves of temptation. Countless hearts feasting upon the fleeting things of earth—pleasures, riches, honors—gradually learn to relish the abiding things of God. Countless souls unfortunately struck down by the hand of sin into the quagmire are again lifted up and strengthened to continue on the road of virtue. Countless habitual sinners, hardened in sin and slumbering in the slough of immorality, are again called to their senses by the pleading voice of the Good Shepherd and washed clean in the Precious Blood.

"If there is something divine," says Father Faber, "in the facility of baptism, reminding us of creation when the word was spoken and forthwith the work was done, there is also something divine in the difficulty and effort of absolution, reminding us of redemption which was accomplished only by a Passion and with Blood. Hearts have to be softened, habits weakened, dispositions changed, occasions of sin deserted, new tastes infused, entanglements of pleasure and sin untied. The Precious Blood has to put forth more of its strength here than in baptism; because it has to overcome inveteracy and resistance. It has also to venture its sacred riches more prodigally here than in the other sacraments. . . . If we could see as God sees, we should behold innumerable streams of Blood intersecting the crowded souls of men, as a vast river-system shows like a net-work on a map; this would be a vision of the prodigality of absolution.

Numberless confessions are heard daily . . . countless human sorrows are healed in the Savior's flowing wounds. Without the shedding of blood there was to be no remission of sin. Millions of souls are at large in heaven today, who without absolution would have been in hell. Yet it were better a whole solar system should be shattered than a single soul be lost'' (Faber, ''Precious Blood,'' Amer. ed., p. 291).

How Often and When Must One Confess

One who truly loves God above all things will detest sin as the greatest evil that can befall him. Appreciating the need of sanctifying grace, without which he cannot do anything meritorious for heaven, he will not deliberately be deprived of it even for a day. Whoever loves his soul more than the pleasure of sin will not endanger it by a delay of repentance. A Christian who unfortunately, through human weakness, or perhaps by misguided passion, has fallen into grievous sin, will immediately resort to perfect contrition and at his earliest convenience go to confession, lest he remain shipwrecked in mid-ocean. Earnest endeavor to lead a true Christian life, in the midst of heathen unbelief and pagan immoralities, makes one feel the need of frequent confession, whether to lessen the grip of habitual sin, or to remove its iron clasp after an occasional fall. Frequent confession may also be a necessary aid in avoiding the proximate occasion of sin, and a salutary source of encouragement in warding off melancholy and despair. Bearing in mind these general principles which interpret the spirit and purpose of the law, let us proceed to the law itself and the teaching of moral theologians.

From the divine institution of penance and its judicial nature, one may infer the necessity of sacramental confession as the ordinary means of salvation for all who have committed mortal sin after baptism. It is necessary by divine and by ecclesiastical law. By divine law one must per se confess at least in a probable danger of death and by canon law at least once a year. The spirit of the law, both divine and ecclesiastical, is not satisfied with this bare minimum. One who fails to fulfill this minimum commits a mortal sin, whether of malice or indifference, whether of pride or sheer sloth, or simply grave disobedience to the precept of the Church. The canon law which commands every one who has the use of reason to confess all mortal sins that were not already directly submitted to the power of the Keys, at least once a year, seems to be an interpretation of how often during life the divine law urges (Can. 901; 906).

We can safely say that he who delays conversion from year to year endangers his soul and, as long as he continues in mortal sin, deprives himself of all his former good works and renders himself incapable of doing anything meritorious for heaven. God gradually withdraws His graces and leaves the sinner to his own folly and misery. With the decrease of grace, vice increases and multiplies until it becomes an abomination and a public scandal. No wonder that Holy Scripture warns against the danger of delaying contrition and penance. No wonder the Fathers condemn it as an obnoxious practice. Noldin calls the precept of penitence a special precept, distinct from the other precepts, so that the unrepentant sinner is condemned, not only on account of unrepented sins, but also on account of the Sin of impenitence. Like the sin of obstinacy in resisting the known truths of God, final impenitence is a sin of special malice and is classed among the seven sins against the Holy Ghost, because of the prolonged wilful negligence or contempt of God's grace. This is the very danger to which the sinner exposes himself when he delays repentance and confession from one year to another. Who knows whether he will receive the grace to repent at the last moment, or even if he does receive extraordinary grace, who can be sure that he will make use of it the moment before the end, after having despised and spurned sacramental grace almost a life-time. No prudent man will take such a long chance at saving his soul. No one in his right mind will so endanger the purpose of his existence, no one will take so great a risk of frustrating God's plan in his behalf. But this is the danger to which one begins to expose himself the first time he refuses to make his Easter confession. That very year he puts himself on the downward path that might easily, and often does, lead to final impenitence.

On the contrary, a good Christian obeys rather the spirit than the mere letter of the law, by confessing his sins once a month. The man who confesses frequently makes a reasonable effort to keep his soul free from mortal sin, and from habits of sin. Such a man may reasonably expect to obtain the extraordinary grace of final perseverance, whereas the one who increasingly prolongs the intervals between confession, who finally disregards both the spirit and the letter of the law and who actually delays from year to year, is presuming upon God's mercy and cannot reasonably expect forgiveness.

The annual confession may be made between January 1st and December 31st, or between Easter and Easter. It binds strictly only when the penitent is guilty of mortal sin, which he has not yet directly submitted to the Keys. (See Can. 901–906.)

Confession before Communion

A Catholic is bound to confess when commanded to do so by an ecclesiastical precept; or when conscious of mortal sin, he desires to receive, or is obliged to receive, a sacrament of the living. The ecclesiastical precept of Easter Communion necessitates the sacrament of penance. One in mortal sin, no matter how contrite he thinks himself, is not allowed to receive Holy Communion at any time without previous confession. Canon 856 allows only one exception to this rule, namely in case of urgent necessity when it is morally impossible to confess for lack of a priest. Vermeersch writes: ''The necessity of receiving Communion in this exception is scarcely any other than avoiding notoriety or infamy. Practically the only case in point would be if one, who is physically or morally present already at the Communion rail, recalls a mortal sin committed since his last confession.'' To safeguard his good name and to avoid scandal, he would be allowed and even counselled to make an act of perfect contrition with the desire to confess later at a convenient time. One who went to confession with his family or friends, but was denied (or delayed) absolution, would not be allowed to make use of this exception. He could not receive, no matter what the odium might be. To avoid scandal in communities that receive daily, such as sisterhoods, colleges and seminaries, the confessor should counsel those individuals who do not remain in the state of grace not to form the habit of daily Communion. If such make it a rule to go four or five times a week, the rest will not look askance at them for failing to go each and every day. Another way to avoid the difficulty is by supplying confessors, even special ones, if need be. (See Can. 521–522.)

Confession before Extreme Unction

In order fruitfully to receive Extreme Unction, the sick person who is conscious of mortal sin must either confess before he is anointed or have, if possible, perfect sorrow. Perfect contrition, or even a serious attempt at perfect contrition, provided it is genuine sorrow, is considered sufficient, if there be a dearth of confessors.

Confession as a Preventive of Sin

The Sacrament is intended not only as a cure and remedy of the soul afflicted with mortal sin, but is likewise a salutary and at times necessary expedient for overcoming grievous temptation. Prevention is better than cure. If confession is the only effective preventive of mortal sin, which it often is, one must frequently make use of it, in order to remain a friend of God. In certain temptations no other means of grace is quite so effective as confession to a priest. In these cases, the respective persons are obliged to go to confession, for if they do not have recourse to penance, they will forfeit the friendship and grace of God.

Conclusion

Let us, therefore, frequently and worthily go to the Savior's fountains, to find new life and salvation from the Lord. May we humble ourselves monthly or even weekly at the feet of the Good Shepherd, to receive forgiveness and confirm our friendship with God. Sacramental confession with absolution is the explicit renewal or confirmation of the soul's covenant with God, sealed and stamped in the Precious Blood. "Remember, O Christian, thy great dignity," says St. Leo the Great, "being a partaker of the divine nature, do not return to your former life of sin." The Saintly Curé of Ars, who often heard confessions from fifteen to twenty hours a day because of the throngs from every part of France, utters this soulful thought: "Remember thou art a Christian, created to the image of God, redeemed by the blood of God, thou art the child of God, the brother of God, the heir of God! A Christian, the object of the complacency of the triune God, the temple of the Holy Ghost: behold, what sin dishonors! Sin, the executioner of thy God and thine own soul's assassin! Sin that snatches from heaven and casts into hell, and yet, alas, we love it!" God commands us to detest sin as the greatest evil on earth, depriving us, if we persevere in it, of the greatest good.

A CHILD'S WISH

"I wish I were the little key,
That locks Love's captive in
And lets him out to go and free
A sinful heart from sin.

I wish I were the little bell
That tinkles for the Host
When Christ comes down each day to dwell
With hearts He loves the most.

I wish I were the flowers
So near the Host's sweet face
Or, like the light that through the hours
Burns on the shrine of grace.

But, Oh! my Lord, I wish the most
That my poor heart may be
A Home all holy for each Host
That comes in love to me."

—Father A. J. Ryan

CHAPTER XXX

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

''The Bread that I will give is my Flesh for the life of the world'' (St. John, 6. 52).

Our God forever with us under the species of bread and wine, this all-holy Sacrament is the center of Catholic faith, of Catholic worship, of Catholic life, the Precious Blood's sublimest achievement. Here divine life and power, heavenly beauty and sweetness are imparted to man. Here is the tree of life, foreshadowed in Paradise; the well of the living waters, foretold to the Samaritan woman; here is the manna of the soul, foreshadowed in the desert; the honeycomb of God, the wheat of the elect; here is the living bread from heaven, the divine refreshment, the medicine of immortality.

As the Israelites in the desert drank from the rock, which Moses struck with his rod, so we in Holy Communion quaff from the Rock, which is Christ. As Elias, about to be taken up to heaven, bequeathed to Eliseus the prophetic mantle; so Christ, prior to His bitter passion and death, bequeathed to us the rich legacy of His body and blood in the Eucharist, the monument of His undying love, the memorial of His expiatory death, the perpetual fountain of grace and holiness, the inexhaustible storehouse of the Precious Blood.

The Preparation for the Divine Promise

One year before His bitter passion, Christ promised to give Himself as the food of our souls. In the marvelous Sixth Chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, we read how Jesus fed five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes. The admiring multitude desired to crown Jesus their king; but He fled. Returning the following day, He rebuked them for their lack of faith: ''Amen, Amen, I say to you. You seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you.'' Here He promised them a *food superior to the loaves and fishes.*

Christ demanded their belief in Him as the *One sent by the Father.* They, in turn, ask for a sign from heaven that they might see and believe. Ignoring all His past miracles, they brazenly ask: ''What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'' Then Jesus said to them (by way of an oath): ''Amen, Amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but *My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.* For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world.'' The Jews, still thinking of the five loaves, clamor to have this bread always. Jesus continues: ''*I* am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst. . . . This is the will of the Father who sent Me: that of all that He hath given Me, I should lose nothing: but should raise it up again in the last day. And this is the will of My Father that sent Me, that *everyone* who seeth the Son and *believeth in Him,* may have life everlasting.''

Often had He in the past, by stupendous miracles, proved His divine nature and power, but now He refused to give a sign. He demands their faith in the fact that He is of the Father, that He came from heaven, in order to save what was lost by sin, that He came as the last and greatest of the prophets, the Teacher and Savior of man. Hence He replies: ''Murmur not. . . . No man can come to Me, except the Father who hath sent Me draw him (by grace and the gift of faith). . . . They shall *all* be *taught of God.* Everyone that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me.''

THE PROMISE AND ITS MEANING

After *arousing* and *demanding* a child-like faith in His divine Personality and divine mission, He promised them the grand mystery of faith, His own flesh to eat and His own blood to drink. He promised them a bread superior not only to the loaves but also *superior to the heavenly manna of old:* "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and *the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world"* (John 6. 48–52).

"How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" This doubt and denial of Christ's divinity and omnipotence was ignored. Christ swore that they must have faith in Him and in His Promise: "Amen, Amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, *abideth in Me and I in him.* As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread, shall live forever" (John 6. 54–59).

Not only the Jews, but also many of the disciples, failed in the crucial test of faith. The latter complained: "This saying is hard and who can hear it?" Carnal-minded, they were told not to picture the flesh and blood of Jesus in the gross sense they supposed, separated from the spirit, but rather under a new form, the living but spiritualized form that He was to assume in the resurrection. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the (dead) flesh profiteth nothing." Nor should they have found it more difficult to believe after He had ascended, since the Almighty can multiply His presence without diminishing His power. The only trouble was a materialistic spirit and a deeply rooted unwillingness to accept Jesus as spiritual King and spiritual food. Craving for a human king, they repudiated the divine; yearning for bodily food, they rejected the spiritual.

Even the believing apostles were put to the test of faith: "Will you also go away?" But Simon Peter answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God.'' Hence You can and will give us Your flesh to eat and Your blood to drink. We cannot comprehend it, but we believe it—and our faith is most certain and secure, because You have the words of truth and power.

Our Lord wished to be understood not in the gross sense of dead flesh but in the literal sense of living, albeit spiritualized flesh and blood. This is not equivalent to a spiritual or allegorical sense. Christ's spiritualized body is not allegorical or figurative but real and substantial, yea as real as the form He assumed of the Virgin Mary, as substantial as the body that was crucified. Not only the Jews and disciples but also the apostles understood the Promise in the literal sense. If the all-knowing Christ had meant them merely in the symbolic sense, He would have been obliged to tell the Jews and the disciples not to depart in unbelief, or at least to correct their impression, if they failed to understand him in the correct sense. But instead of correcting His words, He repeated them most solemnly and insisted that salvation depended on their acceptance. They as well as the apostles and the early teachers and writers in the Church were compelled both by the text and the context to accept the Promise in the exact and literal meaning. Hence we too, who cannot presume to interpret Christ better than His immediate hearers, are likewise compelled to interpret Him literally. Any other interpretation is a perversion of a fundamental truth. (Cf. Wiseman: ''Six Lectures on the Eucharist.'')

THE INSTITUTION

What Jesus Christ promised so clearly and emphatically, He also gave. At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to His disciples and said: ''Take ye and eat: This is My body. . . .'' The Chalice likewise He consecrated and gave to them saying: ''Drink all ye of this. . . . For this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins'' (Matt. 26. 26–28). St. Paul adds: ''As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the Chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come'' (1 Cor. 11. 26).

The Testimony of Tradition

That this sacrament is more than a mere commemoration of the Death of Christ is clear not only from the words of promise and of the Institution, but also from Tradition. Already Macarius Magnes in the *fourth* century refuted the Protestant heresy, twelve centuries before Luther's day: "Christ said: 'This is My body,' not therefore an image of My body nor an image of My blood, as some feeble-minded persons have foolishly asserted; but in very truth the body and blood of Christ.' "

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 386) says likewise: "Since Christ Himself assures us: 'This is My body'; who will venture to waver? And since He Himself assures us: 'This is My blood'; who should ever doubt that it is His blood? At Cana in Galilee He once converted water into wine. Is He undeserving of belief when He converts wine into blood? . . . Therefore let us receive it with full conviction as the body and blood of Christ. For under the *appearance of bread* thou receivest the body, and under the *appearance of wine* thou receivest the blood, in order that through the reception of the body and blood of Christ thou mayest become one body and one blood with Him. In this way, we are made *bearers of Christ,* since His body and blood are received into our members. . . . Hence do not regard it as mere bread and wine; for, according to the Lord's assurance, it is the body and blood of Christ. Though the senses seem to tell thee otherwise, *faith gives thee certainty.* Do not judge by the taste, but obtain from faith the undoubtable certitude that thou hast been vouchsafed the body and blood of Christ. . . . Having been instructed and convinced that what appears to be bread, is not bread, though it seems thus to the taste, but the body of Christ; and what appears to be wine is not wine, though it seems thus to the taste, but the blood of Christ, . . . strengthen thy heart by eating this bread as a spiritual food, and make glad the face of thy soul" ("Catecheses Myst.," IV, no. 2, ff.).

St. Chrysostom (407), the Doctor of the Holy Eucharist, insists frequently and realistically that Christ is truly, really and substantially present on the Altar. "Thou approachest a fearful and holy sacrifice. *Christ* *lies there slain,* to reconcile thee to the Creator of the universe.'' Again he writes: ''You shall drink the salutary blood as if you sucked it with your lips from the divine and immaculate side.'' Pohle-Preuss quotes another famous passage: ''That which *is in the Chalice is the same as that which flowed from the side of Christ* and of this we are made partakers. . . . What the Lord did not tolerate on the Cross (the breaking of His limbs) He permits now in the Sacrifice, through the love of thee; He *permits Himself to be broken* into pieces, so that all may be filled to satiety. . . . The *Wise Men adored this body* when it lay in the manger; they prostrated themselves before it in fear and trembling. Now you behold the same body which the Wise Men adored in the manger, lying on the altar; you also know its virtue and salutary effect. . . . Already in the present life this mystery changes the earth for you into heaven; the sublimest thing that is there, . . . the body of the Lord, . . . you can *behold* here on earth. Yea, you not only behold it, but you also *touch* it and *eat* it.'' Another classic passage is taken from his Homily on St. Matthew, 82 (83): ''How many nowadays say: 'Would that I could gaze upon His form, His figure, His raiment, His shoes! Lo! thou seest Him, touchest Him, eatest Him. He gives Himself to thee, not merely to look upon, but even to touch, to eat, and to receive within thee. . . . Consider at whose table thou eatest: For we are fed with that which angels view with trepidation, and which they cannot contemplate without fear because of its splendor. We become one mass with Him: We are become one body and one flesh with Christ. . . . What shepherd feeds his sheep with his own flesh? Some mothers entrust their new-born infants to nurses; this He did not wish to do, but He nourishes us with His own blood, He unites Himself with us. These are not deeds of human power. . . . We (priests) take the place of servants; it is He who consecrates and transmutes (the bread and wine).''

St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 386) says: ''This bread, as the apostle says, is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer, becoming converted into the body of the Logos (Word) *not by eating and drinking,* but instantly changing into the body of the Logos, as has been declared by the Logos himself: 'This is my body.' Through an act of grace He implants Himself by the flesh into all the faithful, commingling with the body of the faithful, . . . in order that man, by being united with the immortal (body of Christ), be made to partake of incorruptibility. This gift He bestows in virtue of the power of consecration, by transforming the nature of that which is sensible into that (spiritualized and immortalized body of Christ.'' (See Pohle-Preuss: ''The Holy Eucharist,'' pp. 61–65.)

It is unnecessary from the apologetic viewpoint to quote the brilliant passages from Sts. Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Leo the Great, since no one has ever questioned the teaching in the Latin Church.

Summary

After uniting Himself to human nature in the Incarnation, our Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, promised to unite Himself to each individual follower, by imparting to each one His sacred body and blood in the Holy Sacrament.

The Jews, whom He addressed, understood Him to promise His real flesh and blood; Christ's disciples understood the same; the apostles understood the same. And these apostles accepted the Savior's words after the Last Supper in their literal sense; so did their immediate successors and all Christians for fifteen centuries. The early Christians risked their lives to receive Holy Communion; martyrs died in defense of the Eucharist; millions of virgins rejected all other lovers except Jesus in the Eucharist. Three-fourths of the world's Christians today believe in the Real Presence. Could it rest on a more solid foundation? (Cf. ''The Holy Eucharist Explained,'' Sunday Visitor Press.)

The Real Presence, therefore, is the Continuation of the Mystery of the Incarnation. As the infant God lay in the manger, His Divinity veiled in the flesh, so too in the Blessed Sacrament, His divine life is hidden in the tabernacle under the Eucharistic veil. O mystery of faith, who could ever have thought of asking God for His adorable Son? ''Were it otherwise,'' says Saint Vianney, the Curé of Ars: ''Man would have been able to imagine things that God could not do; he would have outstripped

God in the inventions of love! What man could never imagine, God has done, what man could never express or conceive, nor presume to desire, God in His love, has conceived, expressed and executed. Could we ever have dared to tell God to put His Son to death in order to give us His Son's flesh to eat and His blood to drink?" ("Thoughts from the Curé of Ars").

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament

In the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus charms us by His humility and condescension. Adapting Himself to all our needs, He consoles, strengthens, teaches, leads. In prosperity or adversity, in joy or sorrow, in success or failure, may we have recourse to our Best Friend, the Prisoner of Love in His lonely refuge, to hide ourselves in the five wounds, to contemplate in silence and awe the deep mystery of love enshrined in the tabernacle. Here indeed is the antechamber of heaven, the abode of celestial joy, the home of tranquillity and peace. It is good for us to be here.

After we have mastered the idea that Jesus is the living Victim, the Son of God, reigning in our midst and longing for us to pay Him a visit as friend to friend, we shall learn to steal an occasional moment from worldly preoccupations, close our hearts to exterior delights and open them to Jesus, to be enriched with interior joy and peace. Then too we shall realize that "every breath of our prayer, every aspiration of our love, every sign of our agony, stirs the mighty ocean of the love of Jesus! How profoundly He may be hidden from our sight, yet He is open to all that passes around Him, so that He catches the slightest wish of anyone that visits Him, and His heart is tremblingly alive to the whispered accents of our love. Though His disguise is so perfect and the frail species are like a wall of adamant sheltering Him from all creation, it is so pervious to our prayers, that the slightest wish reaches Him behind the veil" (Dalgairns: "Holy Communion").

CHAPTER XXXI

THE BREAD OF LIFE

In this sacrament, the Precious Blood puts on the vesture of omnipresence, multiplying itself in tens of thousands of tabernacles, sharing its life and virtue with millions. In every land where Christ holds sway over the hearts of men, the scene of the Good Samaritan dressing and healing the wounds of the soul is enacted every moment of the day. Holy Communion *is not intended as a reward for virtue,* but *as a medicine* for the imperfections and venial sins that wound the soul.

SACRAMENT OF BROTHERHOOD

After Jesus had instituted the Holy Eucharist, He offered to His heavenly Father the beautiful prayer for unity and fraternal love, as if to show that His purpose was to unite us *with one another through union with Himself.* Very Rev. Garrett Pierse writes: "The Eucharist is the effective Sacrament given by Christ for making His brotherhood a visible reality. . . . The Eucharist is the chief source of Christian fellowship" (*Ecclesiastical Review,* Vol. 76, p. 594).

The union with Christ is internal and direct, the bond of fellowship with our neighbor external and indirect. All the sacraments by their internal operation produce an intimate bond of love. By their external form and public reception, they unite us in external companionship. Above all is this true of the sacrament of the altar —around which centers and develops a common interest among Christians.

Pope Leo XIII clearly saw the need of emphasizing the social aspect of the Eucharist: "Very beautiful and joyful too is the spectacle of Christian brotherhood and social equality which is afforded when men of all conditions, gentle and simple, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, gather around the holy altar, all sharing alike in this heavenly banquet, and if in the records of the Church it is deservedly reckoned to the special credit of its first ages that the multitudes of believers had but one heart and one soul (Acts, 4. 32), there can be no shadow of doubt that this immense blessing was due to their frequent meeting at the divine table; for we find it recorded of them: 'They were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles and in the Communication of the breaking of bread' " (Acts 2. 42). This fellowship with Christ and the "saints" is as universal and as extensive as the Church itself.

Jesus Our Host

When we are honored by the invitation of a friend, we expect him to place before us the best he has. His cellar and pantry are ransacked. The best fruits, meats and drinks are none too good for his guest. Jesus, in the Blessed Sacrament, plays host to all who accept his loving invitation: Come to me all ye that labor and are heavily laden and I will refresh you. Here every worthy guest finds divine refreshment in the heavenly manna of Christ's body, in the well of the living waters, the Precious Blood. Here indeed is the nourishment of the soul, the most sweet feast, the living bread from heaven, the terrible and life-giving sacrament. Jesus takes us, after the feast, into the wine-cellar of His love. He sets charity in order in our souls. And when we are well drunk with the wine of divine love, when our senses are withdrawn from the things of earth and our mind engrossed with the divine object of love, may we cry out with the spouse: "Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because my soul faints with love." Give me the grace to live up to the lofty ideals imbibed at Holy Communion. Buoy me up with courage and hope. Teach me, by surrounding my life with divine graces and favors, the beauty of virtue, especially humility, charity and chastity.

Jesus, Our Spouse

"Let him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth," exclaims the spouse in the Canticle of Canticles. Thus too the soul addresses her spouse in Holy Communion. Let Him, my divine Lover, kiss me with the kiss of His divine mouth, with the kiss of heavenly peace and calm, heavenly joy and bliss, heavenly love and the possession of God Himself. Here the soul, enchanted with God and ecstatic with love, cries out: "I have Him whom my soul loveth, I shall cling to Him and not let Him go. I sat down under His Shadow whom I desired and His fruit was sweet to my palate." Oh, if human lovers cling to each other with mutual affection, if human lovers almost adore each other's presence and feel delighted to see and hear each other, how should we not feel towards our divine Lover in the Blessed Sacrament? His name is honey on our lips. His presence, divine sunshine and happiness to our hearts. His eyes glisten and sparkle as never did an earthly lover's, they glow with divine love. They draw us like a magnet to His heart. May we cry out in ecstasy: "Put me as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death and jealousy as hard as hell . . . many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it." Make me thy jealous lover until death. Let no other steal my heart's love. Let no created person or thing stand between me and my divine Lover.

LOVE-FEAST OF THE SOUL

Holy Communion is the love-feast of the soul. Christ instituted this sacrament, to abide with us as the principle and mainstay of love, to enkindle this divine flame in our hearts. Holy Communion is that heavenly banquet which Jesus has spread for us. He invites us all, as He did St. John, the disciple of love, to lean on His bosom, to drink in His words of love, to be renewed in the spirit of love, empowered with the privileges and graces that flow from love, to be children of love and heirs of love's golden promise. "God is love," says St. John, and "he who abideth in love, abideth in God and God in him." Jesus remains for us poor sinners the one great source of love this side of heaven, beckoning us on to still greater heights of love. "After I am lifted up, I will draw all hearts to myself." Here He draws us with the arrows of His love. He compels us to embrace His yoke which is sweet, His burden which is light. "How great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee'' (Ps. 30. 20). Yes, He has hidden His sweetness under the Eucharistic veil. Here He has assuaged the terror of His majesty. He has condescended to come still nearer to our weakness, provided we love and fear Him. Here ''they shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house, and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure'' (Ps. 35. 9). What does the prophetic word of David: the plenty of thy house, mean but the fullness of divine love, which inundates and almost drowns the soul in the torrent of divine pleasure and spiritual delight.

Wheat of the Elect

Holy Communion is the food of the soul, its nourishment, its divine refreshment. All created things that live need nourishment. God made the vegetable world with its trees and plants; it is an abundantly served table where all the animals come to feed. The plants and animals, in turn, nourish man's body. But the soul's life and energy must likewise be replenished. ''When God wished to provide food for the soul,'' says St. Vianney, ''He cast His eyes over the entire creation, but perceived nothing in the whole world worthy of man. Then looking in upon Himself, He resolved to give us Himself the food for our souls. . . . O soul, how grand thou art, when only God can satisfy thee.''

Holy Communion is the wheat of the elect. As the ear of wheat is composed of many grains closely united to form one compact unity, so we in Holy Communion become one in Christ. By frequent Communion those ties of love and friendship with our Savior become so welded, that we dare to exclaim with St. Paul: ''I live indeed, not I, but Christ liveth in me.'' Our Savior assures us: ''He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him. As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.''

St. Francis de Sales thus describes union with Jesus: ''They have Jesus Christ in their brain, in their heart, lungs, eyes, hands, tongue, ears, feet. But this Saviour, what doth He, thus circulating everywhere? He straightens all, He purifies all, He mortifies all, He vivifies all: He loves in the heart, He understands in the brain, He breathes in the lungs, He sees in the eyes, He hears in the ears, and so of the rest. He doth all in all: and then we live, yet not we, but Jesus Christ liveth in us. Oh, when shall this be, my God, when shall this be? But herein I show to you what we ought to aim at, although we must be contented with attaining thereto little by little. Gradually our interior stomach will accustom itself to this viand, and will learn to digest it well. It is a great point to eat only one kind of food; when it is good, the stomach does its duty far better. Let us desire only the Saviour, and I hope that our food will be digested well.

"Let us boldly communicate in peace, with all humility, in order to correspond to this Spouse, who, to unite himself unto us, has annihilated and sweetly abased himself, so far as to make himself the food and nourishment of us—of us, who are the food and nourishment of worms. Oh! he who communicates according to the spirit of the Spouse, annihilates himself, and says to our Lord: 'Receive me, feed me, annihilate me, and convert me into thyself' " (De Sales, "Practical Piety," p. 273).

Honeycomb of God

Jesus is the divine wax and nectar from which man must produce the honeycomb of God and the honey of virtue. As the bee revels in the flowers, seeking the nectar for honey, so too must the human soul seek the one thing necessary, the nectar of God's love, the honey of virtue. The bee passes the rag-weeds and thistles along the road, to seek and find and cling to the clover blossom. Man too, on the highway of life, must forego the rag-weeds of inordinate pleasure and despise the thistles of sin, to seek and find and cling to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The bee clings tenaciously to the flower cup until it has drained it, so we cling to Jesus, until we extract the nectar of virtue and holiness from its fountain source. The bee is happy when it returns laden with honey to the bee-hive. We should be delighted and rejoiced to carry home with us the God of heaven and earth. We are more privileged than all the honey-bees in the world, than all the angels in heaven. We are more fortunate than the shepherds who sang the second Glory to God on high after the angels announced the birth of Christ. We are more blessed than the Magi and Shepherds, for they could but look upon and adore their infant God in the manger. We receive Him into our very hearts and take Him home with us, bearing within our bosom heaven's King and heaven's joys.

REFUGE AGAINST SATAN

Holy Communion is our refuge against the fiery darts of Satan, the arch-enemy of our salvation. At the very sight of Jesus, the devil, once routed by the cross, must flee in confusion, for how can the devil find place where Jesus deigns to dwell as in His very Home? "When we communicate worthily," says St. John Chrysostom, "we return from the table of the Lord like fiery lions, breathing terror to the devil. The demons are put to flight and the angels hasten to our assistance," lest we be dashed against the rock of temptation and succumb in the slough of sin. Ah! here in Holy Communion is our golden opportunity of casting the little rocks of venial sin, diabolic temptations, the allurement of the world and the enticements of the flesh, against the big rock which is Christ. Ah, we can cling to the Rock of refuge and like chicks beneath the mother's wing, rest secure from the storm of passion from within and from the tumult of a sinful world from without. In Holy Communion we have divine safety.

STRENGTH OF VIRGINS

Holy Communion is the vine that produces virgins. As the vine grows virgin-sprouts which are fed from the sap of the main branch, so too does Christ feed us in Holy Communion. Christ is the vine and we are the branches. Separated from the vine, the branches die; united with the main branch, they share its life and vigor. So with us, separated from Christ, we die; united with Him, we live. Union with Christ transforms our fallen, sin-prone nature. The Blood of Christ, like a divine sap, courses through our veins, mingles with our blood, ennobles it, makes it God-like. It tames our wild, erotic passions, cools our feelings of anger and hatred, checks our unlawful desires, weans us from earthly attachments and draws us to a higher, diviner life. The soul breathes the breath of Christ, and imbibes the divine sap, the blood of Christ.

Pledge of Eternal Life

Jesus is not only the source of life here, but also the pledge of everlasting life. Our first parents were given the tree of life, to keep them immortal in soul and body. By sin they lost the immortality of the body and were subjected to death. In promising us His own flesh and blood to eat and drink, Christ gave us the pledge of immortality after death. "I am the bread of life, your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, Amen I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day. . . . He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever" (John 6. 48–59). Hence it is clear from Christ's own testimony that He himself, His flesh and blood, not merely His teaching, is for mankind the bread of life. Jesus is the fountain of grace. The nearer we draw to the fountain, the purer is the stream. In proportion as we partake of this Pure Stream, will Christ's holy spirit dominate our motives and His Gospel rule our daily actions. The more Christ, by faith and Holy Communion, lives and rules in us here below, the surer will be our future election, the richer our eternal inheritance. "For thee my heart hath fainted away. Thou art the God of my heart, the God that is my portion forever."

Holy Communion is the seed of eternal life. If planted in a responsive soul, watered with the dew of tears and fervent prayers and sunned by a pure intention, it must grow into the tree of life. As a germ of life eternal, it begets in the heart of the devout recipient a yearning for that bliss which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard nor man's heart conceived. Coming into contact with the spiritualized and immortalized flesh and blood of Jesus, our bodies receive the medicine of immortality and gradually prepare for future glory. Doing our part, we are assured of life everlasting.

How to Receive

To attain these salutary effects our motives and dispositions must be worthy and our reception devout and frequent. A worthy disposition implies the state of grace, since spiritual life cannot enter the soul barred by mortal sin. Love cannot participate with hatred. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself. Like Judas, he betrays his Master. Unworthy motives, such as vanity, routine, human esteem, cowardice must be excluded. A good Christian does not commune with Christ merely to please a fond mother or a dear friend, but because he feels the need of divine comfort and companionship. Worthy reception is facilitated by fasting from midnight, which is obligatory for all who are not in danger of death. Sick people who have been bedfast or roomfast for a month or more may, with their confessor's advice, receive after taking necessary medicine or liquid food. This privilege may be used twice a week not only in convents and monasteries but also in private homes.

Frequent reception is urged. "Give us this day our daily bread," from the dawn of Christianity, was interpreted to include the bread of life. The manna from heaven and the well of the living waters gushing forth from the immaculate side of Christ are intended for constant use.

Devout preparation is likewise necessary. The acts of faith and adoration, hope and confidence, love and contrition, humility and desire should be preceded by a remote preparation of mind and heart. Upon retiring and when rising one might profitably dwell upon the trenchant phrase: Jesus is coming soon. God is about to condescend to me.

Thanksgiving is also important. Appreciation unlocks the heart of God and predisposes Him in our favor. Gratitude makes us more appreciative of past favors and is a source of greater profit, for the more we appreciate a benefit or blessing, the more capable are we of profit, the more also do we actually profit, because we enter a closer bond of union with our benefactor. Hence in Holy Communion we draw closer to God and remain longer with Him. Our confidence and intimacy grows, our merits increase and our life is modelled upon the divine Exemplar. Holy Communion for the grateful, loving, child-like, confident soul is not a mere formality or routine but a genuine act of piety replete with heavenly sweetness and delight. It is a foretaste of the beatific love. Humble and grateful souls at times experienced wonderful raptures and ecstasies of love. Witness St. Teresa and other mystics immediately after Holy Communion.

Weekly Communicants would profit immensely by a three-day preparation and a three-day thanksgiving, after the Aloysian method. Thursday might aptly be devoted to the acts of faith and adoration, Friday to humility and contrition, Saturday to love and desire, Sunday to union with Jesus, Monday to gratitude, Tuesday to renewed consecration to Jesus, and Wednesday to petition for God's lasting favors.

THE MASS

"To me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overpowering as the Mass, said as it is among us. I could attend Masses for ever and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words: it is a great *action,* the greatest that can be on earth. It is not the invocation merely, but, if I dare use the word, the *evocation* of the Eternal. He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood before Whom angels bow and devils tremble. This is that awful Event which is the end and the interpretation of every part of the solemnity.

"Words are necessary, but as means, not as ends; they are not mere addresses to the Throne of grace; they are instruments of what is far higher—of consecration, of sacrifice."
—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE HOLY SACRIFICE

The Precious Blood was not content to flow unto death on the altar of the Cross, but considering man's moral needs resolved to remain with us to the end of time not only as a sacrament, but also as a sacrifice. It resolved to stream forth anew on our altars daily, yea hourly, from the rising to the setting of the sun, as the one clean oblation, the one beautiful and pleasing offering of the new Testament.

Sacrifice in general is a voluntary offering of some precious gift to appease another or gain his favor. Thus we speak of a soldier sacrificing his life for home and country. A father and mother spend the fruits of many years' toil to educate their son or daughter. A priest or religious offers his virginal chastity to God. The sinner gives Him a repentant spirit, a parishioner donates one-tenth of his net earnings. These are personal sacrifices. Here we speak rather of the *official religious sacrifice* that God demanded from the people since the dawn of time. Religious sacrifice was offered by all nations and all religions, except the Mohammedans and the Protestants. Men of all nations and all times felt the need of exterior worship and sacrifice.

SACRIFICE ESSENTIAL TO RELIGION

Without sacrifice no true religious worship. Fourfold are man's relations to God. To our Lord and Master we owe the submission or obedience of the heart. The body bends low in adoration before the Lord God of hosts. The lips acknowledge Him as the arbiter of life and death. The hands offer the first-fruits of man's talent or labor as a recognition of His supreme claim upon us.

In as far as we depend upon God, the Sustainer of all, for every thought, word and deed, do we owe Him the sacrifice of a humble, childlike, suppliant heart. Beggars are not choosers, servants are not masters, children are not fathers. Hence the sacrifice of supplication or petition which is the outward expression of our manifold need of God.

As recipients of life, health, intellectual power, moral freedom, divine love and grace together with the promise of immortality we owe the sacrifice of a grateful heart. Gratitude is outwardly expressed by attendance at Mass on Sundays, by freewill offerings and by sharing with others what God has shared with us.

Inasmuch as God is the Great Pardoner, He has the right to demand the sacrifice of contrition. One's detestation of sin is in direct proportion to one's love for Christ Crucified. The sacrifice of a contrite heart is outwardly expressed by frequent confession and frequent attendance at Mass as the memorial of Christ's atoning death.

This fourfold worship may be private and personal or public and official. By our personal acts we may and must cooperate in the official Sacrifice of the Church. In this latter sense we define sacrifice as the offering of a visible and pleasing object, together with its destruction or change by the legitimate priest, to God alone, to acknowledge His supreme dominion over all creatures. For example, the Jewish high priest twice daily took incense and burned it. Then adding flour, oil and frankincense he offered them to God as unbloody sacrifice. Taking a yearling lamb without blemish, he killed it and sprinkled its blood over the other gifts on the altar. The incense that was outwardly changed, being consumed by fire, as well as the blood of the immolated animal, tokened vicarious atonement. The life of the animal (or the burned incense and flour sprinkled with blood) was only a *substitute* for the life of the sinner. Both acknowledged God's supreme dominion over all creation. Hence these sacrifices implied adoration and vicarious atonement. Sacrifice implies also vicarious thanksgiving and vicarious petition.

Both the Pagans and the Jews offered official sacrifice. Plutarch, in the second century before Christ, writes: "You may find cities without walls, without literature, without the arts and sciences of civilized life, but you cannot find a city without priests and altars, on which sacrifices are offered to the gods." Pagan sacrifices were either corruptions of the Jewish sacrifices or the natural outpouring of religious sentiment of the creature towards the Creator.

Cain and Abel, Noah and Abraham, Job, Melchisedech and Aaron offered sacrifice to God. From the very fact that God was well pleased with the sacrifice of Abel we are naturally led to think that He Himself at the dawn of time taught men directly, or at least indirectly through reason, thus to worship. Certain it is that God himself regulated most minutely and definitely the sacrifices to be offered by the chosen people. He had selected the Jews not only to keep alive the notion of the coming Redeemer but also the idea of sacrifice. The Jewish sacrifices were but types of the true sacrifice to come. Their power of pleasing God depended solely on their relation to Christ. The blood of sheep, goats and oxen foreshadowed the bloody Sacrifice on Calvary. The Paschal lamb prefigured the immaculate Lamb of God; the bread and wine of Melchisedech, the Holy Mass, the bread and wine or other fruits sprinkled with the libation of animal blood parallel, though imperfectly, Christ's bloody sacrifice on the Cross and its unbloody renewal and perpetuation on the altar. The loaves of the proposition kept near the ark of the Covenant were the nearest approach to our Holy Communion; the oil and incense symbolized Christ, the annointed Teacher, Priest and King. In brief, all the sacrifices of the Old Law found their fulfillment and efficacy in Christ.

If the Old law had its divinely instituted and divinely regulated sacrifices, then surely the perfect law of Christ must also have a sacrifice. If God was no longer pleased with the symbolical sacrifices of fruits and animals, He gave us one more perfect, His own divine Son. He that spoke by the mouth of the prophet Malachias (1. 10): "I have no pleasure in you . . . and I will not receive a gift of your hand," added the reason: "For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to my name a clean oblation." The Hebrew term "mincha" implies a true and real sacrifice. The text, in brief, proves that the future sacrifice was to be altogether a *new* and *perfect* one, as well as *universal* in time and place. This prophecy points, not as Protestants say, to the Cross, but to the Mass. The Sacrifice on the Cross was indeed a new and perfect one but only local, not universal in time or place. The Mass, however, is offered in every place at every hour of the day.

This clean oblation is no other than Jesus Christ Himself immolated in the Holy Mass. At the Last Supper "taking bread, He gave thanks and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is my body *which is given for you.* Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner the Chalice also, after He had supped, saying: This is the Chalice, the New testament in My blood, which shall be *shed for you*" (Luke 22. 20).

According to St. Luke (22. 19) and St. Paul (1 Cor. 11. 24), our Lord gave us His body not only to be received sacramentally but also to be given or delivered as a sacrificial offering. This is clearly implied in "given for you" and "delivered for you." "For you" denotes vicarious sacrifice. In like manner the three Synoptic Gospels quote our Lord as giving us His blood for a vicarious sacrificial offering. St. Matthew writes: "Shed for many unto the remission of sin" (Matt. 26. 28). The liturgical shedding of blood betokens a sacrificial purpose, the one uppermost in the minds of the Jews to whom St. Matthew wrote. That adoration, petition and thanksgiving are not excluded is clear from St. Mark 14. 24 and S. Luke 22. 20. The phrases "shed for many" and "shed for you" indicate a more general or universal sacrificial purpose. They include all our supernatural needs and all our relations with God. The words "Do this in commemoration of me" are not a pious wish or fraternal counsel, but a divine command to immolate Christ's body and blood in the same manner and with the same words as the Master had used.

In its divine origin and splendor, the Sacrifice of the Mass stands out as an everlasting monument, perpetuating the grand work of redemption, reminding us of Gethsemane, Jerusalem, Golgotha. It stands as a token of Christ's unutterable, divine love, glorifying the Savior and completing His work in relation to us; communicating to us sinful creatures His merits and graces. In the Old Law the sacrificial offerings, except the holocausts, after being dedicated to the Lord, served in part as a repast for the priest and people, to signify communion with God. Communion formed an integral part likewise of Pagan sacrifice. In the Mass Christ our victim after dying a mystical death, in the separate consecrations, is communicated to priest and people in a most personal and intimate manner. By receiving during Mass we partake of the complete sacrifice and in a special way make all its graces and blessings our own for time and eternity.

What the sun is to the stars the holy sacrifice of the Mass is to the other exercises of religion. In fact it is the most exalted sacrifice, the sublimest act of worship the world has ever known; for in the Mass Christ himself is Priest and Victim, the human priest is Christ's servant and representative. The Mass is the divine drama renewing in a mystical way the bitter Passion and Death of Christ and applying His merits to all men and all generations unto the end of time. On the Cross the wells of salvation were dug; in the Mass we quaff the precious elixir of life. The Mass is the divine laboratory where the food of angels is compounded and God himself communicated most intimately to man. Father Schulze calls the Mass "the focus in which the rays of public and private worship meet and from which all the piety and devotion of the faithful receive divine life and power. . . . Here is religion pure and undefiled. Here the Creator and the creature embrace each other with the kiss of peace and enter a union still closer and more intimate than the union of Christ with His Church, a union similar to that of the three divine Persons. Here man is lifted up to God and God lowers Himself to man."

What would become of this world, where sin is heaped upon sin and crime upon crime, were it not for the continuous Sacrifice of the Mass ever storming heaven and pleading for mercy? Ah, it is the Mass, the central Sun of the spiritual universe, that sheds its divine light, warmth, strength and beauty over the benighted world and gives it a new lease of life! Unknown and unsuspected temporal calamities are daily driven away like clouds before the wind, by the oblation of the Precious Blood.

The Mass, therefore, is the central act of worship, the divine heritage of the Catholic Church. Some of our separated brethren have indeed an altar, but alas, it is de-void of Christ's perpetual sacrifice, an empty symbol, a constant reminder of the time they too, still in union with Rome, celebrated Mass. Ah! what a contrast between a meeting house and the house of God? Non-Catholics sometimes feel this difference when attending Catholic service. God remains with us, really, truly and substantially under the appearances of bread and wine. As the infant God lay in the manger, His divinity veiled in the flesh, so here in the august Sacrifice and Sacrament the living Christ is hidden under the Eucharistic veil. At the words of Consecration: "This is My Body, This is My Blood," etc., the infinite and All-Holy God descends from the highest heavens upon our altars, to sanctify with His Precious Blood our obedience, humility, gratitude and contrition. Though we who offer the Mass are unworthy to be heard, God will look down with pleasure upon the wounds and blood of His Son. God Himself averred on Mt. Tabor: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17. 5). The Mass is the one clean oblation in an unclean world. The one beautiful offering, the one worthy gift, the one pleasing Sacrifice of the new Testament. For us who appreciate its treasures, it is the master-key that unlocks the heart of God.

CHAPTER XXXIII

BENEFITS OF THE MASS

The graces and blessings of the Mass no mortal tongue can tell, no angelic or human mind conceive or imagine. Simply infinite! One Mass is greater in the eyes of God than all the worship of men, angels and saints combined and extended for all eternity. It is Christ, the infinite God who offers, Christ the All-Holy who is offered, and therefore the Mass in itself is infinite in value, as precious as God Himself. Of all the means of grace none is so pleasing to God; none so effective in driving away the storms of divine wrath; none so appealing to divine Mercy; none which so confounds the powers of hell; none which so ravishes heaven with ecstatic delight; none which rains down so abundantly the graces and blessings of God upon the Church Militant here on earth; none which so powerfully comes to the rescue and relief of the Suffering Church in purgatory. The Masses you have heard will be your greatest consolation in the hour of death. Every Mass will go with you to judgment, plead for pardon, shorten purgatory, and merit an increase of glory.

Attentive assistance at Mass helps to center the mind and its thoughts, the will and its desires, the heart and its affections, on Christ, the exemplar. Daily Mass with Communion, like heavenly sunshine restores heat and light to cold and clouded souls. It melts icy hearts and enkindles a heavenly light. Christ promised, after being lifted up, to draw all hearts to Himself. He came to cast fire upon earth: the fire of love.

The sublime ceremonies of the Mass stimulate the mind, brace the will and inflame the heart. To understand this divine drama is to re-enact in spirit the tragic scenes of the Garden, at the public square, in the courtroom, along the streets of Jerusalem, on Calvary's heights. We see with transfigured beauty the resurrected and ascending Savior. Clothed in the choicest words of Holy Writ, and surrounded with heavenly symbols, the Mass replenishes in us the waning rays of faith, re-enkindles the failing sparks of hope, inflames the smoldering embers of love. Ah! these mysteries, so rich in grace, give us new light, new energy, ennobled joy. They expand our hearts that we may run in the way of the Commandments.

Let us then assist at the Mass wherever and whenever possible, with recollection and devotion. If we keep vividly in mind the perpetuation of Calvary, if we follow Jesus in the priest at the altar, we shall be thrilled with the zeal and fervor of the chosen few at the foot of the Cross.

About fifty years after the Reformation in Greenland, a German Catholic commercial traveller witnessed a unique celebration. All the Catholic priests had either been put to death, or banished from the country. Only a few scattered Catholics had remained faithful. Every year on Christmas eve they met in a Catholic home to celebrate the feast. In this northern country the wintry night continues for months. Days ahead the faithful, warmly clad and provided with lanterns, plowed their way through deep snow towards a little hut at the foot of a lonely hill.

When all were assembled on Christmas Eve, at midnight, and after the roll-call had been read, to note that none were missing, the venerable head of the house, a man in the seventies, his hair bleached, his hands trembling, and his figure stooped with age, stood at a small table in a corner of the room. After a prayer and a short welcome, he drew out from the table a receptacle, and from it a corporal. It was yellow, seared and tattered with age.

With tender reverence the man held it up to view. "My dear brethren," he said feelingly, "on this sacred linen the last Holy Mass was said in this country fifty years ago. I served that Mass. This cloth is all that remains. On it rested the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Let us kneel down and thank God for the possession of this precious relic; and beg Him to send us priests again, so that we can have among us once more the Sacred Body and Blood of our Lord." Then the assembled Catholics, tears streaming from their eyes, fell prostrate before the linen which had held the Holy Sacrament.

METHODS OF HEARING MASS

Perhaps the best method of hearing Mass (according to St. Alphonsus and Bl. Leonard of Port Maurice) is to divide the Mass into four parts, devoting each part to one of the four ends of Sacrifice. First: From the beginning of the Mass to the Gospel occupy yourself with a brief examination of conscience together with acts of *contrition,* satisfaction, and prayer for pardon. Ask God to accept the sufferings of Christ as an atonement for your sins. Secondly: From the Gospel to the Consecration *thank* God for all His benefits. Thank Him for having created, redeemed and sanctified you. Breathe forth into the ear of God a sincere act of gratitude for adopting you into the divine family and making you His own spiritual son and heir. Offer up Christ, during the offertory, as the one worthy gift of thanks you can present to your heavenly Father. Thirdly: When the supreme moment of consecration arrives, *adore* the unseen Presence of God on the altar, acknowledge Him as your sovereign Lord and Master, and subject your whole heart and soul to Him. In the presence of the angels who hover about in awe and wonder, adore heaven's King who desires to make your soul a home of silent prayer. Childlike, with fear and confidence, prepare to receive him either actually or spiritually. Awaken lively sentiments of faith, hope, love, sorrow, humility and desire. Speak thus to the expectant spouse of your heart: My soul sighs after Thee, for Thou art the bread of life. My God comes to me and I to Him. Who? My God! To whom? A miserable sinner! His unworthy creature and servant! And why? Sheer love! My God, Thy condescension inspires the angels with wonder! Can I remain cold and indifferent? Can I refuse Thy love? Whence is it that this God of love and holiness vouchsafes to come to me, so unworthy of His presence? Yes, Lord, I do not deserve that Thou shouldst come to me; say but the word and my soul shall be healed. Make me worthy. Lord, the angels tremble, and yet Thou biddest me take heart. Ah Jesus! give me confidence and child-like trust in Thee. Make me ever yearn to be Thine. Fill my languishing soul with Thyself! While the angels hover near in awe and rapture, adoring the God whom only man can receive into his heart, let us go quietly and reverently to the altar, embrace our God with a loving kiss, a hearty welcome, a wholesouled self-offering. And when the Lord of heaven and earth reigns within our soul as on His Throne, may we tremble with awe and holy fear, to think what sanctuaries we are, when Jesus Christ our very God dwells within us. Adore in silent, prayerful wonder.

"Lo, God is here! Let us adore,
And own how dreadful is this place;
Let all within us feel His power,
And silent bow before His face."

Fourthly: After Communion to the end of Mass is the best time to storm heaven with a volley of *petitions* for the graces and the virtues we most need, especially the great gift of final perseverance. By hearing Mass devoutly and in some such way commemorating the four ends of sacrifice, we discharge in union with Jesus, the High Priest, the four cardinal obligations to God. (Cf. Herbert Card. Vaughan: ''The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass: Various Methods of Hearing Mass,'' pp. 126–130, 10th ed., Herder Co.)

Another excellent method is to hear Mass by way of meditating first on *our sins;* then on their effects, *the passion of Christ;* and finally on *union with Christ.* This has been called hearing Mass according to the three colors: black, red and white. It is quite easy to remember: black signifies our sins and our ingratitude; red, the atoning blood of Christ; and white, the peaceful union with God. (We do not refer to the color of the vestments used for Mass.) How appropriate during the prayers at the foot of the altar to ponder over our sins that caused the bitter passion of Christ. The priest bending low at the foot of the altar symbolizes Christ taking upon Himself the burden of sin. The uncovering of the Chalice may be looked upon as a reminder of the shameful exposure and cruel scourging of the Son of God for man's sensuality. The covering of the Chalice recalls Christ covered with a mock crown of thorns, to atone for our pride and self-will. At the Elevation we see not the brazen serpent of the desert raised aloft to heal the sick, but the very God-man elevated to the Cross to heal the wounds of the soul. The Consecration and Elevation of the Chalice recalls the blood gushing forth from the five wounds on the Cross, to cleanse man from sin. The Pater Noster reminds one of the seven soulful words of the dying Savior. The breaking of the host signifies the separation of His body and soul in death. The words of the Agnus Dei: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" recalls the Centurion's profession of faith: "Truly this is the Son of God."

The color white typifies peace and union with Christ. After Communion we should bury our sins with Christ in the tomb and resolve to rise from sin to a new life. Having risen with Christ, we ought to make every effort to retain the white robe of innocence and to remain shod with the white sandals of peace.

Perhaps the easiest way of hearing Mass is to follow the priest with a Missal or prayer-book, adapting our prayer and meditation to the varying moods of the divine drama. How appropriate to join the priest at the foot of the altar in the spirit of humility and repentance; at the Gloria, Preface and the Sanctus, to praise the triune God; at the Credo, to renew our faith in the divine mysteries; at the Epistle and Gospel, to thank Him for the gift of faith, and resolve to live the word of God. When the bread and wine are offered, how fitting to unite ourselves in spirit with the gift on the Altar and consecrate our hearts to God! The Elevation is the best time to adore the true body and blood of Christ and to meditate either on the words of consecration or on the death of Christ. At the Pater Noster reflect on the Lord's prayer and resolve to cherish its profound Christian spirit. At the Agnus Dei ponder the Victim on the Altar, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, and strive to imitate the meek Lamb of heaven. At the Communion receive Jesus into your heart, beg his graces and go home with Jesus on your lips, Jesus in your heart, Jesus in your life. If possible, go to Mass and Communion daily.

CHAPTER XXXIV

EXTREME UNCTION

The Precious Blood is a healing balsam not only in life but also in death. Confirmation, as we have seen, brings forth fighting Christians for the battle of life; Extreme Unction arms and equips the soldier of Christ for the fearful encounter with Death. Yes, even in death, the Precious Blood, the fount of salvation, flows at our bidding. In fact, the hour of death is the Precious Blood's golden hour. Then it is that it puts forth its final and supreme effort of love and mercy.

Whereas the other six sacraments are intended to model our life in its various stages according to that of our divine Exemplar, Extreme Unction should liken our death to Jesus' death. Jesus died bathed in His Precious Blood, so too shall we, His brethren, experience the same lavish flow in the healing balsam reserved for that last dread hour, when all the powers of hell are pitted against us. If ever we need help, if ever we require love and mercy, surely it is in our last agony; for then neither wealth nor power nor wisdom, nor beauty nor social influence will avail us aught. In that grim hour we need the oil of courage to strengthen our faltering will, the balm of faith and hope to soothe our mind and calm our feelings, but above all we need divine love and sorrow for sin, to smooth out our past and prepare us for the all-important future. Ah, how many a soul hovering on the borderland of hell has, owing to the "secret strength of that holy oil, the hidden operation of that sacramental grace," been won for God and finally, perhaps after much purgation, been consigned to the Loving Shepherd's bosom in heaven!

The effects of Extreme Unction are manifold. As the avenging angel fled before the door-posts that were sprinkled with the blood of the Paschal Lamb, even so does the devil lose heart whenever he is met in mortal combat by the dying Christian signed with the Precious Blood. Venial sins vanish at the sight of the Precious Blood flowing upon the repentant soul. This sacrament likewise remits the temporal punishments due to sin; it calms the fretting mind; it bolsters up the inconstant will; it eases conscience and imparts peace. Sin, the remains of sin, doubt and fears of sin, anxieties about contrition, vain regrets, self-delusions, petty follies—all are effaced in the atoning Blood of Jesus. And if perchance a soul in dire stress must face death unshriven, the Precious Blood, whose mission is to save, cancels the guilt as well as the eternal punishment of mortal sin, provided the sinner is truly sorry and desires to confess.

Extreme Unction sometimes heals even the physical disorders of the body. Some persons are under the false impression that as soon as they receive the Last Sacrament they must die, as if the reception hastened death. Consequently they put it off until it is too late, because they are loath to die, as if delaying the sacrament had the power to ward off death. Lest any one cherish such delusions, experience shows that this sacrament, which heals the wounds of the soul, frequently restores the body to health, if God wills it. Hence, as soon as a *probable* danger of death sets in, hasten to call the priest, that he may pour the oil of God, the healing balsam of the Precious Blood, upon your *gravely sick* relative or friend.

Even if death ensue, heavenly solace awaits the soul. What greater favor can God bestow than access to heaven? What greater consolation than to escape the atoning flames of purgatory? Our aim therefore should be a perfect preparation for death by frequent reflection and earnest prayer. By *sincere and universal contrition* and by faith in the holy sacrament we can be wholly cleansed from sin, from the remains of sin and from the punishments accruing, thereby insuring, if God sees fit, our immediate possession of heaven. Let us pray that when death draws nigh, no dearth of contrition, no secret attachment retard the intended purpose of this sacrament.

CHAPTER XXXV

HOLY ORDERS AND VOCATIONS

Besides the five sacraments designated for all, the Precious Blood with divine forethought has provided two special sacraments, namely Holy Orders and Matrimony. The married state needs special grace to procreate and rear children in the fear and love of God, to impart and preserve the life of the body; whereas the priestly state requires a grace all its own, unique and powerful, to sanctify the priest and through him the family, to keep society in vital touch with God, its final end: in a word, to impart, preserve and glorify the life of the soul.

''Of all the sacraments,'' says Father Faber, ''the most like marriage is Ordination to the priesthood. It weds hearts to Jesus and makes those hearts His home. Each grace of ordination is a characteristic of Jesus'' (prodigality of the Precious Blood). It imparts with an indelible, spiritual mark the sublime likeness to the Sacred Humanity, giving the ambassador of Christ the power to continue Christ's work of saving souls.

As far as his mission and power are concerned, the priest is exalted above the patriarchs and prophets of old, above the angels, yea even in a certain sense, above the queen of all saints. The prophets indeed were commissioned by God to ''give the knowledge of salvation'' to the people, ''to enlighten them who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, to direct their feet in the way of peace,'' but the priest, in addition to all this, actually imparts to the repenting sinner the peace of conscience. The angels were sometimes entrusted with special missions from on high. Raphael guided the devout Tobias on his journey, aided him in collecting a debt owing to his father and incidentally obtained a cure for his father's blindness and an excellent wife for himself. The saints were at times instruments of God in working astounding miracles and conversions; but the priest daily takes the place of Christ in perpetuating the most stupendous miracle and the sublimest act of worship in the Mass.

Mary was privileged to be the sanctuary of the Most High. From her the Son of God took human nature and through her man was reunited to God; but the priest can daily repeat the mystery of the Incarnation by bringing the glorified Christ from heaven to the altar and from the altar give Him to the people.

The priesthood also reflects Christ's life in the Church. It repeats the domestic life at Nazareth, the teaching life, the suffering life, the sacramental life in the Church; is not the priest at his work as catechist, preacher, teacher, as a silent sufferer of the insults and mockeries of the world, as the dispenser of the sacramental mysteries at the bedside of the dying, as the high priest at the altar and in the confessional, another Christ? The priesthood reproduces the wonderful functions of Christ's love and mercy, multiplies them for the individual and brings Christ into the most intimate relations with man. In his life's work, the priest is the bearer of Christ, of His doctrine and sacramental graces. He is the mediating angel with Christ, Who in turn is our Mediator with the Father. Throughout the world the priests are the ministering angels of God. Ascending the ladder of Jacob in meditation and prayer; descending to man in the spiritual works of mercy; ascending to Christ, the head of the Church, and descending to the members thereof.

Father Faber calls the priesthood the "sacred vessel in which the other six sacraments are kept and out of which they radiate their glory and their life." The Holy Eucharist is indeed the highest source of the supernatural life here below, yet all its graces flow through the priesthood. Penance is the second plank of safety, yet it is administered by the priest. These two sacraments are the poles of the spiritual world and the priesthood is the divinely constituted axis, the center of which is Christ. The same is true of the other sacraments: Their one human channel is the priesthood, the earthly heart of the Precious Blood, of which the other six sacraments are the veins and arteries, diffusing the merits and graces of Christ to all the members of His Church.

The priest is not only the dispenser of the divine mysteries and the mediating angel or ambassador of God to men; but also the mouthpiece of God, the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Christ established His Church to teach and save all men. "Go teach all nations—preach the Gospel to every creature," is God's command to the apostles and their successors and helpers, the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. Bishop Hedley writes: "The whole order of divine operation, creation, redemption, this physical universe, man's intellectual and moral nature, all history and science, exist for the one purpose of bringing man to the knowledge and service of God. All these things are dumb and ineffectual without the word of teaching. The priest speaks God's own message. Religious teaching is God's . . . means of access to the human heart. It is as if the Omnipotent had bound Himself to silence by His own laws . . . as indeed *He has stood behind the veil,* waiting for those to speak for Him whom He has chosen for that sublime office. To them He has entrusted His word . . . a word which they have not had to invent nor to elaborate, but which is ready from the ages and which is put into their hearts and mouths by Himself. Them He furnishes with every kind of power, simply that they may *speak for Him.* The sacraments, even the Holy Eucharist, are empty and dead, yea, deadly, to those who have never been instructed or have spurned the word of teaching." ("Lex Levitarum," *passim,* esp. p. 125.)

The priesthood is the light of the World. In the darkness of error and sin, its heaven-born doctrine is a lighthouse and a refuge. The priesthood is the city of God set upon the summit of a benighted world, magnet-like drawing men to God. The priesthood is the divine Captain's compass to guide men away from the rocks of heresy and the shoals of religious indifference.

The moral and spiritual salt of the earth is in the priesthood. By an edifying life, the priest preserves men from moral corruption and spiritual decay. Hence Christ said: "If the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" When the priest combats errors, hinders vice and forgives sin, strengthens the weak of soul, comforts the distressed, encourages the despondent, mildly sways the hardhearted and obstinate to repent, levels the barriers of ignorance and prejudice, builds up virtue and character, he is indeed the salt and savor of the earth.

If Christ thus reproduces Himself in the priest, making him, as it were, His Second Self, His mediator with man, the mouthpiece of revealed Truth, the light of the world and the salt of the earth, what a god-like privilege to be called to the holy priesthood. Young man, ponder this! Perhaps you too are one of the chosen few whom God calls to that divine work of saving souls. No special or extraordinary sign from heaven is needed to assure you of God's call. A vocation to the priesthood, according to Pope Pius X, implies: "That any young man is physically and morally able, has sufficient mental acumen and has the right intention." Hence the well-founded hope that the youthful aspirant will be able and willing rightly to discharge the obligations of the priesthood is all that God and the Church require.

May the Precious Blood, operative in the priesthood, continue to make its grand, inspiring appeal to the youthful aspirant! May it lead many an earnest-minded, noble-hearted, resolute lad to espouse the cause of Christ, to become God's nearest helper and man's best friend. Oh! what a life must not the priesthood be, in union with the triune God, and performing the works of God.

The celebrated convert and Dominican preacher, Lacordaire, describes the priestly life: "To live in the midst of the world without wishing its pleasures; to be a member of every family yet belonging to none, to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds; to go from men to God and offer Him their Sacrifice and prayers; to return from God to man and to bring pardon and hope; to have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity; always to teach and pardon, always to console and bless. . . . My God, what a life! and it is yours, O priest of Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XXXVI

MATRIMONY AND HOME LIFE

All who have had experience in rearing a family are agreed that the married state is one of self-sacrifice, hardship and privation, though withal a labor of love with the recompense of joy. To aid parents in their manifold duties, God had instituted already in paradise the rite of marriage which Christ raised to the dignity of a sacrament. God freely gives His grace and blessing to such as have the courage to become good fathers and mothers, to such as are His instruments in bringing up sons and daughters for God and heaven. If He grants you the dignity of father ''you will be addressed with the same sweet title with which nations salute their founders and rulers, with which we Catholics salute our visible head, religious orders their founders. You will be called father as God himself is called the Eternal Father.'' Ah! the dignity of motherhood, so precious in God's sight, especially since Christ himself, the Eternal Son, deigned to honor mankind by being born of woman. In Mary's maternity, motherhood was elevated to its pristine glory, for Mary is the second and greater Eve who is the mother of all the living, our common mother through her Son.

By the sacrament of Matrimony, husband and wife become one in flesh and one in spirit; they enter a soul-union similar to the sublime mystical union between Christ and His Church.

By the aid of God's special grace to which they have a right, in virtue of the sacrament, they are able to live, labor and bear with each other and for each other in that self-same spirit of unity and peace that exists between Christ and His Church; to love and cherish each other as Christ loves and cherishes the Church (Ephesians 5. 22 ff.) with a holy, innocent, God-fearing love. This pure mutual love helps to control and supernaturalize the passions and enables man and wife to be a mutual help in their religious, social and domestic duties. It will make them each other's guardian in the holy virtue of purity, give them respect for each other and be an incentive for them to consecrate themselves to the lawful purposes of marriage according to God's intention and law.

This holy love might aptly be compared to a tree. It sends its roots deeply and firmly into the soil of the fear of God, it raises its head above the sordid motives of earth, above all selfish and lustful intents, into the pure and wholesome atmosphere of the love of God, performing its actions from the pure motive of God's greater honor and glory, to which it ever tends and soars. Perfected by the love of God, husband and wife will wish to become father and mother and make the family tree branch out into sturdy, God-fearing sons and pious daughters, and after heaven has blessed them with smiling, fair-eyed, happy children, this tree of love will spread its arms to protect the God-given little ones from all harm of body and soul. Truly it will become a spiritual tree, whose shade is free from evil influences and bad companions. Is it not a solemn duty of parents to watch their children grow up under their own *personal care, well-instructed in religion, strong in virtue, and angelically pure in body and soul?* Is it not the mother's strict obligation to "imbue the child's mind with those ideas and his heart with those feelings and emotions which are suitable to that tender age, when a single word, the noticing of a single occurrence, may do untold harm? Is it not the bounden duty especially of the mother in the city to leave off some of her superfluous social engagements and devote herself entirely and radically to her God-given children?" (Cf. *America,* March 22, 1919, p. 621; and June 28, 1919, p. 315). Only then will the children grow up innocent and pure, *forearmed* with the weapons of faith, long before they come to know the mystery of iniquity, when they are under the watchful care and authority of the father, and still more, the loving advice and instruction of a good Christian mother, combined with the good example of both parents. Only under such circumstances can the child imbibe the true spirit of religion and the beginnings of a sound moral character. (Cf. Rev. Mgr. Canon Crook: "The Preparation of Children for the Sacraments," in "Folia Fugitiva," p. 66.)

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus enthroned in our homes, purify and ennoble our family circles, and model them after the heart of Jesus, on that ideal home of the Holy Family at Nazareth! May the Precious Blood and its sacramental graces build up renewed, sanctified and edifying homes throughout this fair land. (See writer's ''Christian Home in Modern Life,'' Chapters I–III.)

CHAPTER XXXVII

CONCLUSION

It is therefore no exaggeration to say that our Holy Mother the Church nurses her faithful and obedient children in every stage and station of life, from the cradle to the grave, at her own life-giving breast with the Precious Blood. Says Father Faber regarding the "Easiness of Salvation": "Must not God mean us to be saved, when there is not a conjuncture in our fortune, not a winding in the road of life, but at the turn we find Him waiting with some strange beautiful invention of love, the very mechanism of which none but an all-wise Artist could have contrived? . . . Not less wonderful is the *power of meriting* which *grace communicates to our good works,* as though the Heart of Jesus were supposed to animate each of them. That we should be allowed to steep the slightest of our ordinary inconveniences in the Blood of the Incarnate Word, and make them strong, vigorous and heaven-reaching satisfactions for our sins is marvelous indeed. . . . Earth is strewn so thickly with the materials of meriting, that all day long we have nothing to do but gather them up in armfuls, as the poor gather firewood in the forest, and even with less toil. Grace is superabundant, and incessant and universal. The abundance of grace is almost as wonderful as its nature. We live in an ocean of grace as fishes live in the deep sea. It is above, beneath, around us, everywhere and overwhelmingly. . . . It cannot be too often repeated that the wakeful person breathes grace, lives in its light, and leans on its support, as much as we breathe the air and see by the daylight and have the hard safe crust of the planet beneath our feet" ("Creator and Creature," London ed., pp. 284, 285, 286).

Thus the Precious Blood, inviting weak and sinful man to lean on the strength of God, goes on fulfilling its divine mission of saving, sanctifying and glorifying our race. Indeed the mystery of Redemption is the divinely chosen means of accomplishing the *power* of God; the Precious Blood is the *Wisdom of God* hidden from eternity, but manifested by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, heralded by St. Paul, lauded with apostolic fervor and vigor by Sts. Bernard, Bonaventure, Mechtildis, Gertrude, Catharine of Siena, Catharine Emmerick and others, especially Father Faber and our own Father Maximilian Walz, C. PP. S. However, a unique manifestation and glorification here on earth was reserved to Bl. Gaspar del Bufalo, who founded in response to the divine call and the special needs of modern times, the now flourishing and vigorous Society of the Most Precious Blood, whose aim is to do particular honor and spread a special devotion to the Price of our Salvation.

What a privilege to be enrolled under the banner of the Precious Blood! What an extraordinary privilege to be a priest of the Precious Blood! Who can appreciate what it means for a priest to be given the power of renewing Christ's sacrifice, of daily repeating the mystery of the Precious Blood and applying its redeeming graces to sinful mankind.

Ah! hear him repeat the words of Christ: "This is the Chalice of my Blood of the new and eternal Testament, the mystery of faith which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins. Do this in commemoration of me." Indeed the mystery and the miracle of faith. Another heaven-reaching power is that of forgiving sin. Ah! hear the priest say in Christ's name: May the Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee, and I by His authority do absolve thee from every bond of excommunication and interdict in so far as I am able and thou needest it, and then too I absolve thee from all thy sins in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Not only the priest, but also the layman must further the cause of the Precious Blood. Our Lord once revealed to St. Gertrude that the faithful should assist the priest in applying the fruits of the Precious Blood to all mankind, but especially for the conversion of heretics, infidels and sinners, for the spread and exaltation of the Church, and for the peace of the world. By prayer, self-denial, sacramental union, social action, Catholic *esprit de corps* shall the faithful be an apostolic laity, in the words of St.

Peter: "living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to *offer up spiritual sacrifices* acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2. 5).

Doing the bidding of our Lord, both priest and laity shall more profoundly realize what they are and have in view of the Precious Blood. In the trenchant words of the Council of Trent: "All our glorying is in Christ, in Whom we live, in Whom we merit, in Whom we make satisfaction, working fruits worthy of penance, fruits which have their force from Him, which are offered to and accepted by the Father through Him," Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, to Whom be honor and glory and benediction and power and wisdom and strength forever.

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PART VI

ANALYTICAL CONTENTS OR SUMMARY

ANALYTICAL CONTENTS OR SUMMARY

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Familiarities dare not be inculcated. Nor even be allowed by the parents of high school children. Indirect method is best. The growing boy's sense of shame and honor must be educated. Respect and chivalry. Brotherly consideration. In time of need or in some heroic moment, the boy should be praised for the brotherly and protecting care toward his sister or friend. Warning against false perspective and the evil woman. Read Proverbs, Chapter 7.

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By Contemplation, we retire into the inner court of God's presence and we hold mutual converse with our Lord. Four degrees are: consideration, love, desire, aspiration. If the devil finds it difficult to make us sin grievously, he resorts to the stratagem of discouragement in prayer. Courage and cheerfulness persevere. Unity and simplicity are indispensable. The bee that roams and hums gathers little honey. The painter repeats the same strokes and concentrates upon his canvas. The hasty and excited swimmer drowns. The consumer of many books learns little thoroughly. The ideal way to pray or contemplate is to forget oneself, as a child, and be all intent upon God,

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2. Repentance rewarded: This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.
3. Mother and Son: Mother, behold thy Son. Son, behold thy Mother.
4. Chaos and Abandonment: My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?
5. Love of souls: I thirst.
6. Redemption completed: It is consummated.
7. Resignation: Into Thy Hands, I commend my Spirit.

The five wounds. Trophies of victory. Roseate suns shedding light and grace.

The Church is the Bride of Christ. The Cross and the Chalice are symbols of grace and instruments of salvation. Our debt of gratitude.

PART V

THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF CHRIST

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Sacraments are ministrations of Jesus continued in the Church. A sacrament for every period of life, from the cradle to the grave.

Baptism is first grace. Spiritual regeneration. Innocence preserved by watchfulness and prayer. Candidates for heaven. Association of the Holy Childhood rescues and baptizes abandoned pagan children.

Confirmation is oil of God. Sacrament for Youth. Remedy vs. independence and inexperience. Soldier of Christ for battle of life. Jesus pities the Rich Young Man. Sevenfold gift. Meaning and Purpose of each.

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Remission of sin not confined to baptism and perfect contrition. An easier and safer method. Devil's attack on confession. Salutary Shame of confession prevents secret crimes and social disorders. A Divine, not a human Institution. Proved by Scripture, history and reason.

Christ had the Power to forgive sin. Promised and gave it to Apostles and their successors. Proofs from Scripture and purpose of Church. Power not merely declaratory but judiciary and punitive.

Natural to confess, despite pride. Servants, lovers, friends confess. Priest an unparalleled confidant. A non-Catholic begs confession.

Salutary for every shade of conscience. Sick man needs physician. Youth needs salvation from its own ignorance and folly. Inveterate sinners need the extraordinary help of confession. Advice courageously given and patiently accepted.

XXIX. Confession Is Necessary.................... 213

Ordinary means of reconciliation. God's plan not only easier and safer but mandatory. Perfect contrition includes the desire to confess. Confession to God alone is a subterfuge. Priest is the minister of God and Good Samaritan acting in the place and name of Christ. Priest alone has power of keys opening heaven to sinner. Authentic and God-appointed dispenser of the Precious Blood. Millions saved by confession, who would otherwise be lost. Difficulty of absolution from inveterate sin reminds one of the Death of Christ and need of true contrition. Delay of conversion

contrary to the spirit and letter of the law, and very precarious to salvation. Confession before Communion, in case of mortal sin. Preparation for the last Sacraments. Preventive of Sin. Lesson: Sin robs man of his Christian heritage and right to heaven. Hence deserving of hatred. A good Christian flees from Sin as from a Serpent.

XXX. The Blessed Sacrament...................... 223

Tree of life. Rock of the living water. The Divine Prophet bequeaths to mankind the mantle of Protection.

In preparation for the promise, Christ demands and inculcates faith in the Messiah and Divine Teacher. Refuses to give a sign or proof. Demands belief upon divine authority.

Promised a superior manna as food for the Soul. The bread that He will give is His own Flesh and Blood. Doubt of Jews and disciples ignored. Confession of Peter approved. Mystery more fully explained to the apostles. The Real, not symbolic, Flesh and Blood. Spiritualized and glorified Christ. Clear from text and context.

Instituted immediately after the Last Supper. This is my Body which is given for you—This is my Blood which shall be shed for you.

Literal interpretation held by Catholic Church is based on the tradition of nineteen centuries. Protestant theories of symbolic, figurative, dynamic presence of Jesus in the Sacrament are neither original nor correct. Twelve centuries before Zwingli and Oecolampadius, Macarius Magnes excoriates the symbolic and figurative interpretation, as held already in the fourth century by some sporadic heretics, and insists upon the real and true Body and Blood in the Sacrament. St. Cyril of Alexandria writes of the certainty of faith as overruling what appears to the senses. St. Chrysostom: Christ lies slain. He permits His Body to be looked upon, touched, broken, eaten. He is a Shepherd who feeds the flock with His own Flesh and Blood. St. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the change from bread and wine to Christ's Body and Blood as the result of consecration not of reception. Therefore refutes Luther's second or revised theory of momentary presence at reception.

Catholic belief holds the true, real and substantial Body. Denies and reprobates the symbol theory of Zwingli, the figure-theory of Oecolampadius and the dynamic theory of Calvin.

Scriptural, historical and moral reasons for literal meaning. St Vianney on the mystery of faith.

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Visits to Blessed Sacrament. The hidden Prisoner of love catches the slightest wish and answers the whispered accents of prayer. Here Divine Condescension adapts itself to all our needs.

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Remedy for weakness, not reward for virtue. Sacrament of Brotherhood of men through fellowship with Christ. Social equality at the table of the Lord. Divine Host gives His guests best food and drink. The Divine Spouse seals our lips and hearts with Kiss of undying love. The Divine Lover, magnetic but jealous, brooks no interference or infidelity.

Love feast of the soul. Plenty of God's house and the torrent of divine pleasure. The enchanted bread. Wheat of the Elect. Like the food we eat, Christ becomes a part of us: Christ in our heart and brain, in our eyes and ears, hands and feet, on our tongue, in our life. Honeycomb of God containing the nectar of all virtue. Man, the honey bee of God, must seek the Sacramental Clover, cling to the sacred Cup, extract the divine Nectar and return home laden to the bee-hive of heaven.

Refuge against Satan. Strength of virgins. Pledge of life. Seed of glory.

How to Receive. Worthily, devoutly, frequently. Worthiness implies freedom from mortal sin, virtuous intentions, fasting from midnight. Frequently means at least once a month or oftener, according to one's spiritual needs. Devoutly refers to immediate disposition and includes the immediate preparation and thanksgiving.

XXXII. The Holy Sacrifice 241

Not a mere prayer but a sacrificial action by an official minister of God. Not a mere invocation but an Evocation of the Eternal Word. Official religious sacrifice is essential to religion. Fourfold Relationship to God is basis of fourfold sacrifice: Adoration, thanksgiving, satisfaction and petition. Both pagans and Jews had official sacrifices. Pagan sacrifice essentially a dictate of nature or a relic of patriarchal revelation. Jewish sacrifices, commanded and approved by God, were symbols of the more Perfect Law of Christ and of the Perfect Sacrifice of Christ. Christ the Passover of the New Testament. The True Lamb of God immolated for sinful man.

Prophecy of Malachy refers not to the Cross but to the Altar. Calvary a new and perfect Sacrifice but not universal in time or place. Complete fulfillment in the Mass. Relation between Cross and Altar.

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Words of Institution imply not only a sacrament, to be received, but also a sacrifice, to be offered. This is my body, which is given for you. My blood which shall be shed for you. The words: given and shed, imply sacrificial action. The Mass is the Projection of Calvary.

Communion completes the sacrifice: An integral, though not essential part of the Mass (Consecration is essential).

Mass is the central sun of the spiritual universe. Central act of Catholic worship. The Master key to the divine treasures. The gentle zephyr from heaven. The Rainbow of God. The Divine Magnet.

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The Mass infinite in itself. Finite in its application, depending on human dispositions. This holds for the particular and general fruits that accrue to the people having the Mass said and for those who attend, and also for the special fruits that accrue to the Celebrant and the Ministers. Sublime ceremonies are pictures of the suffering, death and Resurrection of Jesus. Story of the seared yet hallowed Corporal.

Three methods of hearing Mass: According to the four ends. According to the three colors, red, black and white. The Mass-book or other prayer book.

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